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SAINT AUGUSTINE ON THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN JUDGMENT

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I am the author of this thesis, and all the work within it is my own. This work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Ronald Keith Haflidson

22 May 2014

Abstract

In *On Christian Teaching*, Saint Augustine writes, “Just and holy living depends on being a good judge of things.” This brief sentence lucidly articulates the importance that judgment plays in Augustine’s thought. This thesis is the first full-length study of how he understands the distinct role of the Holy Spirit in judgment. I argue that judgment denotes both the discernment of a thing’s nature and evaluation of it; and we become good judges only as we are re-ordered by the love which is, in Augustine’s favourite pneumatological verse, “poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (Romans 5:5). I analyse this transformative work of the Spirit according to two broad categories: first, the Spirit re-orders our *relation to creation* principally by uniting us to the Word, the second person of the Trinity, in whom all things are created, and so we are able to discern a thing’s nature and evaluate it according to God’s purposes in creation; and, second, the Spirit re-orders our *relation to time*, as we patiently endure this troublous life as pilgrims hoping for eternal Sabbath rest; within this eschatological horizon situated in the age between Christ’s first coming and his return, we restrain ourselves from making both unfounded and unnecessary judgments as we defer to God’s final judgement. This thesis is divided into two parts. In the first part, on the “theory” of judgment, I explicate the consistent relation throughout Augustine’s corpus between pneumatology, judgment and ethics (chapter one). I then proceed to trace out his account of how the gift of the Spirit’s love perfects our judgment by re-ordering our relation to creation, and, conversely, how lust distorts it. A right relation to creation turns on taking up our middle place: below God, next to our neighbours, and above nature (chapter two). In the second part, on the “practice” of judgment, I focus first on other-judgment, especially the role of mercy (chapter three), and then in the fourth and final chapter I turn to self-judgment, including a lengthy consideration of the nature and role of conscience (chapter four). For Augustine, then, it is only by the Spirit’s love that we are made good judges, and, simultaneously, it is only when we are good judges that our love conforms to the truth both of God’s good creation and of our in-between age.

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I regard it as one of the greatest gifts of my life that I have a family who are so unfailingly supportive, even while they often have little idea what I am actually up to. My mother (Gwen), father (John) and sister (Kara), each in their own unique way, live lives full to bursting with humour, love and wisdom. I am grateful for their examples of lives well-lived.

Finally, my biggest thanks go to my partner, Mr Tom Clement. He is surely the one who most suffered with me (and because of me) through the writing of this dissertation. The latter half of this dissertation considers how Augustine understands mercy. I am grateful that the person with whom I share my life so strikingly embodies what my dear friend Augustine regards as the virtue most central to Christian holiness.

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Introduction

God, who at this time taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
-- Collect for Pentecost, *Book of Common Prayer*

The subject of this study arose from my repeatedly puzzling over one of Augustine's most difficult and exhilarating texts, the final book of *Confessions*, especially his interpretation of the sixth day of creation. Augustine tells us that when God gives human beings dominion over all creation, we exercise that dominion by judgment. And he further specifies that we become capable of such judgment by the Holy Spirit (13.23.33). It is this relation between judgment and pneumatology which is the subject of this study. Two questions will guide our explorations: What is judgment? And how does the Spirit make us good judges?

Before outlining how we will proceed, I will briefly indicate one issue in contemporary Christian ethics that lies behind our exploration of this subject. While this study confines itself to the interpretation of Augustine in dialogue with the relevant scholarship, I do have contemporary discussions in view. One such discussion is the nature and place of love in Christian ethics.

Stanley Hauerwas is adept at putting difficult questions before the Church. In a typically bold and thought-provoking essay entitled "Love's Not All You Need", he argues that "if Christianity is primarily an ethic of love I think that it is clearly wrong and ought to be given up, since our moral experience reveals that such an ethic is not sufficient to give form to our moral behaviour."¹ The immediate impetus for his article, published in 1972, was

¹ 'Love's Not All You Need', *Cross Currents*, 24 (Summer-Fall 1972), 226-237 (p. 227). Reprinted in his *Vision and Virtue: Essays in Christian Ethical Reflection* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame, 1974), pp. 111-126. Page numbers in text refer to the original *Cross Currents* version.

to critique situation ethics, but Hauerwas suggests that many Christians' positive response to situation ethics was likely because, at least in part, the "emphasis on love as the essence of Christian behaviour [as opposed to law or rules] strikes us as correct" (226).

The accusations that Hauerwas levels against contemporary love-ethics are numerous, trenchant, and, in my view, largely accurate. We might summarize his criticisms as belonging roughly to three categories: a love-ethic is lazy, toothless and deluded. Lazy because it assumes we either are in love or we are not (229), and so it settles for "moral intuitionism" instead of the hard work of deliberation (235); it is toothless because its central virtue is kindness, and so "sensitivity" is prized above "rationality", "sincerity" instead of "right and wrong" (234); and, finally, the love-ethic is deluded because its devotees become "living platitudes [who] refuse to see the world as it is" (229) believing instead that love is the answer to every question. Hauerwas is especially concerned that a love-ethic buys into the illusion that suffering can be avoided and so we are left with an "ideology for our own self-interest and unwillingness to suffer" (236). While this article was originally published over forty years ago, the relevance of these criticisms to contemporary moral discourse, both Christian and not, remains; one heard all of these senses of love used, for example, in recent debates on euthanasia.

And what does Hauerwas offer as the centre of Christian ethics if not love? There does seem to be an ambiguity in his answer to this question. He spends considerable time providing an alternative account of love which could better serve as the centre of ethics. The problem, according to Hauerwas, is that love has been abstracted from the central Christian story of Christ crucified and risen. Christ came not to teach us to be nice to one another, as if that would ever cause controversy let alone crucifixion, instead he came "to establish the condition that makes love possible" (228). We can confront suffering because Christ died and rose again that his disciples "might live free from the fear of reality" (236). Such a love, then,

is inseparable from truth, “which may require us to do what appears unloving if we are to treat the other with respect” (231); and love must also be joined with justice so that it might be “realistic and upbuilding” (231). Yet even with this more adequate account of love, Hauerwas does not think it should be at the centre of Christian ethics, because there ought not to be a *centre* of Christian ethics: “The Christian is thus better advised to resist the temptation to reduce the Gospel to a single formula or summary image for the moral life. Christian ethics and the Christian moral life are as rich and varied as the story we hold and the life we must live to be true to it” (232).

Augustine surely bears much of the responsibility historically for the prominence of love in Christian ethics (if not for the particular cluster of meanings that now attach to the term). Indeed, Hauerwas refers to two key bases within Christian tradition that account for the centrality of love, and both owe much of their distinct shape and prominence in Western Christianity to Augustine: the doctrine of the Trinity as an eternal relation of love and Christ’s summary of the law as love of God and neighbour. On the nature of the Trinity, Rowan Williams has argued that prior to Augustine’s conception of the Spirit as the love shared eternally between Father and Son, the Spirit did not have a clearly defined role within the Triune life; and as a result of this development, Augustine pictures God “as self-gift, as a movement into otherness and distance in self-imparting love.”² On the dual-love command, after a brief survey of its place in other Church Fathers, Oliver O’Donovan concludes that “Augustine is responsible...for the predominance of the ‘summary’ in Western Christian Ethics.”³

Thus by returning to Augustine, we return to one of the great originators and interpreters of the nature and place of love in Christian ethics. And we do so with the

² ‘*Sapientia* and the Trinity: Reflections on the *De Trinitate*’, in *Collectanea Augustiniana: Melanges T. J. Van Bavel*, ed. by B. Bruning, J. van Houtem, M. Lamberigts (Leuven: Peeters, 1990), pp.317-332 (p.331).

³ *The Problem of Self-Love in Saint Augustine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), p. 4.

hypothesis that much of what Hauerwas rightly criticizes as problematic with contemporary conceptions of love in Christian ethics are not inherent to an ethic centred on love.

Perhaps the most distinct difference we see between many contemporary love-ethics and Augustinian love is Augustine's constant pairing of love with judgment. This returns us more narrowly to the subject of this dissertation. By judgment, as we will see, Augustine refers to the discernment of a thing's nature and our evaluation of it. The Latin terms we will encounter most consistently are the verbs *iudicare*, *estimare* and *approbare*. Augustine binds together love and judgment in the following three ways.

First, in order to love well, we must judge rightly. Only if we can discern a thing's nature does our love respond to the reality of a thing as created and sustained by God. And so we will see that judgment is often tied to those terms which denote ordered love for Augustine, including *in* and *propter* God, and *usus* and *fruitio*.

Second, Augustine also believes that it is a duty of Christian love to judge ourselves and others when we sin; we are called to judge in order that we might offer correction (*corrigere*) that will, ideally, lead to repentance and amendment of life.

Third, it is only by the Spirit's love that we are made capable of right judgment. We will see that it is the Spirit who brings us on the inside of creation, as it were, so that our judgments conform to reality as known and loved by God; it is by the Spirit that our perception of creation's goodness conforms to God's. As we are ordered by the Spirit, so we can discern the order in creation; and as we discern that order by judgment, so we can order our loves; and so too we can evaluate sin effectively and offer correction. We will consider this both in terms of how the Spirit re-orders our relation to creation and to time.

In terms of creation, the Spirit's love brings us to our middle place in creation, so that we are subjected to God, beside our fellow human beings, and above the rest of creation. From this middle place our minds are united to God's Wisdom, the Son, in whom all things

were created, and so our discernment of things' natures and our evaluation of them conform to the place they have in God's creation. Indeed, as we will see, by judgment and correction we exercise our dominion in creation and participate in the Spirit's perfecting work. Further, the Spirit develops our capacity for judgment by inspiring us to faith in, and imitation of Christ, the only just man. By faith and imitation of him our lives in the world are re-oriented to look beyond themselves to the reality of creation as known and loved by the Triune God.

In terms of our relation to time, which is relevant especially to our judgment of and response to sin, the Spirit's love establishes us as pilgrims journeying to eternal rest with God. Before we are ushered into that rest, God consummates history with his final judgment. Our judgment and correction of sin, both others' and our own, must be situated within this eschatological horizon; we are called to judge, in order to prepare ourselves and others for that final judgment, and yet whatever judgments we make must defer to God's perfect and final judgment. As we will see, Augustine identifies being merciful as a way of both attending to our fellow human beings as equals under God, and living in this age after the coming of Christ and before his return in judgment.

Our study is divided into four chapters that can themselves be divided into two parts: the first part on the "theory" of judgment (chapters one and two), and the second part on the "practice" of judgment (chapters three and four). In our first "theoretical" part we establish, in the first chapter, the relation between pneumatology, judgment and ethics; and in the second chapter we look at how the Spirit's love develops our capacity for judgment, and how lust distorts it. It is in this chapter that we will explicate the relation between love, lust and our middle position in creation. Our middle position will then recur throughout the subsequent two chapters. In our second "practical" part we then look at judging others (chapter three) and judging ourselves (chapter four). Our relation to time comes into clear

focus when we discuss judging others; and the nature and role of conscience will be central to our discussion of self-judgment.

To study Augustine is to be confronted with a staggeringly massive wealth of literature, both Augustine's own impressive output, and the scholarship on him. I have decided to strive for comprehensiveness in terms of Augustine's works, and selectivity in terms of the secondary scholarship. I engage with a range of secondary scholarship, and have generally chosen the most authoritative and influential readings of Augustine to take as my conversation partners. I have also sought a combination of Augustine specialists (such as Lewis Ayres, Oliver O'Donovan, and Phillip Cary) and other scholars whose more general projects consider Augustine at length (such as Charles Taylor, Martha Nussbaum and Nicholas Wolterstorff). I do so in order to contribute to both scholarship that is exclusively devoted to Augustine *and* scholarship that is concerned with his legacy and potential on-going relevance.

Each chapter focuses its attention on several scholars whose work intersects with my own. In the first chapter, I am especially concerned to establish the significance of this dissertation, given the lack of attention the relation between pneumatology and judgement has received in work on Augustine's Trinitarian theology. With the second chapter, I engage primarily with the large body of literature on Augustine's interpretation of 1 John 2:16, and offer an alternative reading of the significance of the Johannine triad of love of the world in Augustine's thought. In the third chapter, I look especially to recent interpretations of Augustinian mercy to demonstrate that much of the theological density of Augustine on mercy has been lost. And in the final chapter I both establish the lack of work on Augustine's conception of conscience, and I then use my findings on Augustinian conscience to offer an alternate reading of Augustinian interiority. As will be clear from the references, my reading of Augustine owes most to Oliver O'Donovan and Rowan Williams.

We will range widely over Augustine's texts. Chronologically speaking we rarely consult texts from earlier than 389 or later than the mid 420's. In terms of his early works, we return frequently, especially in our first two chapters, to what is widely regarded as the great work of his early period, *On True Religion*. We will demonstrate, what has thus far been hardly noticed, that this is a key text in the relation between pneumatology and judgment. We will also return again and again to his masterpieces, *Confessions*, *On the Trinity* and *City of God*. We also draw, especially in our second "practical" part, from his sermons, letters and Scriptural commentaries. As well, we will generally focus not on how and when Augustine changed his mind, but on the persistent consistency of the relation between pneumatology and judgment. That consistency makes it all the more important that this topic be given the attention that it has thus far yet to receive.

A Note on Titles, Abbreviations and Dates

For the English translations, Latin abbreviations of the titles of Augustine's works, and for my dates, I follow *Augustine Through the Ages*.⁴ When I have consulted other sources in dating they will be referred to in the footnotes, with the exception of my dates for specific books in *On the Trinity*, in which I follow Lewis Ayres.⁵

⁴ Edited by Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

⁵ *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 118-120.

Chapter 1

The Theory of Judgment I: Pneumatology, Judgment and Ethics

“But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he is himself judged of no man.”

-- 1 Corinthians 2:15 (KJV)

My purpose in this first chapter is to establish how Augustine conceives of the relation between pneumatology, judgment and ethics. We will divide our treatment in two, beginning first on the side of the relation between pneumatology and judgment, and then moving on to the side of judgment and ethics. In the first part, on pneumatology and judgment, I argue that as we are ordered by the Spirit within us, so we are able to discern the order of creation without; such discernment of creation's order is the basis of true judgments. We will move chronologically through key texts on the Spirit and judgment--beginning with *On Eighty-Three Varied Questions (Question 18)* and *Letter 11* (ca. 389) and concluding with *The Trinity* 9 (ca. 414-418)--to establish the consistency of this relation. In the second part, on judgment and ethics, I argue that our capacity to judge well enables our love (and, therefore, our action) to conform to creation's order; and, thereby, we are able to participate in the Spirit's activity of approving and perfecting what God has made. This section will treat in new ways texts we already considered, and will also include other key texts on judgment and ethics. Again we will see the consistent presence of this relation between judgment and ethics in Augustine's works, ranging from early works (*On True Religion*, 390-391) to late (*City of God* 11, ca. 417; *The Trinity* 9, ca. 414-418). In the third and final section of this chapter, I argue that the Spirit's role in judgment and ethics fits within its role of enabling us to perceive and respond to the goodness of creation; to do so we will follow the relation

between the Spirit and goodness in Augustine's commentaries on Genesis, beginning with *Genesis Against the Manicheans* (388/389) and ending with *City of God* 11 (ca. 417).

Throughout this chapter we will also situate our study within the recent re-evaluations of Augustine's Trinitarian theology. To date, there has been no full-length study of the relation between pneumatology and judgment, nor has the subject been treated in any depth in studies of Augustine's Trinitarian theology. This is despite the fact that scholarly work on Augustine's Trinitarianism has turned increasingly to focus on the Spirit. In this chapter we will interact primarily with the two most significant works on pneumatology in recent years, Lewis Ayres' *Augustine and the Trinity* and Chad Gerber's *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology: Contextualizing Augustine's Pneumatology*.⁶ Both are impressive pieces of scholarship which demonstrate Augustine's rich pneumatology and his complex and creative engagement with Scripture, pro-Nicene theology and pagan Platonism. Their treatment of pneumatology generally excludes the Spirit's role in judgment. And yet, as we will see, the relation between pneumatology and judgment appears in many of the texts that have proved so crucial to these scholars. When these texts are treated, they are done so in passing; often there are passages in these texts which have been thus far neglected altogether. We will focus much of our attention on passages in two such texts, *On True Religion* and *Confessions* 13, which have received little attention, but which bring our focus into clear view. This relation between pneumatology and judgment allows us to explore how Augustine sees the Spirit's role in Christian ethics.

⁶ Surrey: Ashgate, 2012.

I. Pneumatology and Judgment

The essential logic of the relation between pneumatology and judgment that persists throughout Augustine's works is present in his first (or second)⁷ statement of it in *Question 18*. There, he establishes the parallels between the three features of created things, God's Triune nature, and the three questions of classical rhetoric. First, Augustine establishes that every created thing (1) exists, (2) has a specific nature, and (3) a "coherent structure" (*congruit*); second, that the Creator of all things is the Triune God who is "(1) excellent, (2) intelligent, (3) blessed"; and, finally, that the three questions of classical rhetoric are "(1) Does a thing exist at all? (2) Is it this particular thing or something else? (3) Should it be approved or disapproved?" According to Ayres, "there is no clear parallel to Augustine's Trinitarian appropriation of [the rhetorical questions] in Latin Christian literature."⁸ We evaluate a created thing, then, based on our knowledge of its nature; if we judge that it is flourishing, we declare it blessed. Thus the final evaluative question is concerned especially with the Spirit's work of sustaining and perfecting the nature given by the Son. This role of the Spirit belongs to what Gerber calls Augustine's "order pneumatology", which comes to prominence in Augustine's theology in 389 to 391. Judgment clearly belongs to this early, and consistent, "ordering" work of the Spirit.⁹

Written around the same time as *Question 18*, these three rhetorical questions appear again in the midst of a dense Trinitarian discussion in *Letter 11*.¹⁰ Notably, both Ayres and

⁷ It is not clear whether Augustine first wrote *div. qu. 18* or *ep. 11*; it makes no substantial difference to my argument.

⁸ *Trinity*, p.66.

⁹ Gerber nicely summarizes the argument of *div. qu. 18* thus: "According to Augustine's Platonic model we evaluate things by bringing the intelligible form, directly seen by the eyes of the mind, to bear upon its instantiation in the world. We approve of it...when it conforms to the intelligible pattern. We disapprove of it when it deviates excessively. Augustine thus assigns the question regarding the evaluation of each thing to the third constitutive trait of each thing since this trait is the preservation of form to the extent that it can be preserved. In other words, it most directly pertains to a given thing's degree of con-formity, the degree to which a thing remains in its particular form and thus beauty itself" (p. 178).

¹⁰ Ayres argues this is a key text of Augustine's early Trinitarian theology which shows the influence of pro-Nicene arguments regarding the inseparable action of the three divine persons. See Ayres, 'The Fundamental Grammar of Augustine's Trinitarian Theology', in *Augustine and His Critics: Essays in Honour of Gerald*

Barnes see *Letter 11* as a crucial early text in Augustine's Trinitarian theology, but their treatment of it hardly mentions judgment. Further, they do not consider *Question 18*, which shares much with *Letter 11*, but establishes the relation between judgment and pneumatology more clearly. At issue in *Letter 11* is a challenging question Nebridius has put to Augustine: why did the Son alone become incarnate? Augustine responds that, given the Son's role in creation, it is appropriate that he alone became incarnate because in so doing he "taught a certain discipline for living and gave an example of doing what we have been commanded under the majesty and clarity of certain principles." The Triune person who gave human beings their nature at creation also provides the living example of God's purposes for that nature. Augustine then proceeds to link the Son's role in creation and redemption with the second rhetorical question of "what [a thing] is." He further argues that the answer to that question gives the basis to "either approve or disapprove, for whatever it is, it deserves some evaluation." As in *Question 18*, then, the Son provides us with the knowledge of a thing's nature which gives the criterion for judgment. The Spirit's role in judgment is less clear because Augustine does not, in this text, relate the Spirit and the third question. Nonetheless, he does emphasise that while the Son gives us knowledge, it is only by the Spirit that we come to and remain in that knowledge; the Spirit's "gift and function" is to give "a certain interior and ineffable tenderness and sweetness of remaining in this knowledge [revealed by the Son] and of scorning all things." We see here, albeit in an inchoate way, that it is part of the Spirit's role in redemption to make us capable of judgment by uniting us to the Son.¹¹

Bonner, ed. by Robert Dodaro and George Lawless (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 51-76 (pp. 55-56). Michael Barnes concurs, and suggests further that the focus on inseparable operations, which begins in the 350s, "becomes the most distinctive feature of pro-Nicene polemic, and--by the 380s--is identified as the substance of Nicene theology." See Barnes 'Rereading Augustine's Trinitarian Theology', in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Doctrine of the Trinity*, ed. by S. T. Davis, D. Kendall and G. O'Collins (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) pp. 145-176 (p.155).

¹¹ My reading of *ep. 11* and *div. qu. 18* interprets Augustine as establishing an analogy between the Triune persons' work and the three features of created things (that are treated by the three rhetorical questions). This reading has been challenged by Barnes who sees the primary purpose in the analogy to lie in providing an example of inseparable operations, and not in establishing how the specific features of created things relate to the Triune persons; see "Rereading", p. 158. Ayres concurred with Barnes' skepticism in an earlier article

This inchoate relation receives its fullest treatment among Augustine's early texts in *On True Religion*, written in 390-391. We quote this key passage at length:

If the soul, while it continues in the course of human life, overcomes the desires which it has fed to its own undoing by enjoying mortal things, and believes that it has the aid of God's grace enabling it to overcome them, if it serves God with the mind and a good will, it will undoubtedly be restored, and will return from the mutable many to the immutable One. The mind will be re-formed by the Wisdom which is not formed but has formed all things, and will enjoy God through the Spirit, which is the Gift of God. It becomes 'spiritual man, judging all things and judged of none,' (1 Corinthians 2:15) loving the Lord its God with all its heart and all its soul and all its mind, and loving its neighbour not carnally but as itself. He loves himself spiritually who loves God with all that lives within him. On these two commandments hang the whole law and the prophets.¹²

We reserve the latter third of this passage on judgment and the dual-love command to our next section on judgment and ethics. In this section we will first establish what Augustine denotes by judgment and how this relates to his other use of the term, and, second, how this brings out the subjective side of judgment.

First, having treated only three early texts which refer to judgment, we have already encountered two senses of the same term (*iudicare*). In our two earlier texts, judgment referred straightforwardly to evaluation, as it does elsewhere in *On True Religion* (see, for example, Augustine's discussion of beauty: 30.56). Yet in our current passage, in judgment

('Remember that you are Catholic': Augustine on the Unity of the Triune God', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8 [2000] 39-82), but, as Gerber notes, recently in *Augustine and the Trinity* he seems to have abandoned that skepticism (p.172n90). Gerber's response to Barnes' and Ayres' (now abandoned?) skepticism is apt: "Augustine...is not scouring creation for an example of inseparable threeness that he might use to illuminate a similar reality within the Triune economy. Rather, he is discussing the very inseparable action of the Trinity with which his response is concerned...Created things are the single-yet-triple action of God manifested--all things exist, have form, and enjoy permanence by virtue of being created by the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. Much of Augustine's teaching in *Epistle* 11 is superfluous if this is not his intention...This 'causal-creative' understanding of Augustine's analogy is even more overtly operative in *Question* 18" (p.173). I would add that the clear connection between the Spirit and judgment in later works, including *conf.* and *Trin.*, also suggests that Augustine had in mind an analogy between the Spirit's work and the third rhetorical question.

¹² *vera rel.* 12.24 (CCSL 32: 202): "Si autem, dum in hoc stadio uitae humanae anima degit, uincat eas, quas aduersum se nutriuit, cupiditates fruendo mortalibus et ad eas uincendas gratia dei se adiuuari credat mente illi seruens et bona uoluntate, sine dubitatione reparabitur et a multis mutabilibus ad unum incommutabile reuertetur reformata per sapientiam non formatam, sed per quam formantur universa, fruaturque deo per spiritum sanctum, quod est donum dei. Ita fit homo spiritualis omnia iudicans, ut ipse a nemine iudicetur, diligens dominum deum suum in toto corde, in tota anima, in tota mente, et diligens proximum suum non carnaliter, sed tamquam se ipsum. Se autem spiritaliter diligit, qui ex toto quod in eo uiuit deum diligit. In his enim duobus praeceptis tota lex pendet et prophetae."

we do not approve or disapprove of a created thing, we discern its nature; specifically, as we will discuss further, the “spiritual man” distinguishes between what is primary, our rational nature, and secondary, our bodies. Augustine uses judgment in this same sense later in *On True Religion*: “Do not let us seek the highest in the lowest, nor cleave to the lowest. Let us judge these things lest we be judged along with them. Let us attribute to them no more than, as lowest forms, they deserve, lest seeking the first in the last, we be numbered with the last instead of the first” (34.63). The hierarchical description indicates that part of discerning a thing’s nature includes determining its place within the order of creation. While this does involve distinguishing between creatures of greater and lesser value, it also requires the recognition of the particular goodness of each thing: “We must admit that a weeping man is better than a happy worm. And yet I could speak at great length without any falsehood in praise of the happy worm” (41.77). We have, then, two senses of judgment, which will remain throughout Augustine’s works: discernment of a thing’s nature and evaluation of it.

How are these two related? The first is the basis for the second; only when we have a conception of a thing’s nature do we have grounds for approval or disapproval, as we saw in case of the three rhetorical questions. That these two belong together is indicated by the obvious absurdity involved if one were to disapprove of one’s house-plant for being unjust. Thus Augustine distinguishes in *On True Religion*, and elsewhere--such as in *On Free Will*, *Confessions* 13 and *The Trinity* 12--between knowledge and judgment. In *True Religion*, Augustine defines knowledge as the discovery of what cannot change (i.e.: God’s nature), whereas judgment is concerned primarily with what *can* change and *how* it ought to change: “The difference is that, for knowing, it is enough to see that a thing is *so* and not *so*. For judging, it is necessary in addition to see that a thing can be thus or not thus; as when we say it ought to be thus, or have been thus, or to be thus in the future, as workmen do with their works” (31.58). Often the conception of a thing’s nature is assumed or intuited when we

evaluate it; nonetheless the two belong inextricably together. Further, we see that knowledge of that which is unchanging ought to ground our judgment of that which is changing; true judgments include a created thing's relation to God.

This passage from *On True Religion* also puts before us the subjective side of judgment. In *Question 18*, Augustine is concerned with the grounds for judgment, while in *Letter 11* and *on True Religion* he is concerned with how we become capable of judgment. As we ourselves are ordered by the Spirit (the subjective side), so we become capable of discerning the ordering work of the Spirit in creation (the objective side). Through the activity of the Triune God we are given access to a true conception of a thing's nature based on God's purposes in creation.

Before continuing our consideration of this passage, we ought to pause briefly to note the scant attention this passage has received in treatments of Augustine's pneumatology. While Gerber, as we have seen, treats the Spirit and judgment in *Question 18* and *Letter 11*, his impressive and lengthy treatment of *On True Religion* does not discuss this passage at all.¹³ Similarly Ayres identifies *Letter 11* as central, but he does not follow the development of judgment in our passage from *On True Religion*.¹⁴ This is despite the fact that both Ayres and Gerber regard *On True Religion* as an absolutely essential text in the development of Augustine's Trinitarian theology in general, and his pneumatology in particular.

Certainly, on the face of it, this passage seems to offer nothing new. We have a typical Augustinian ascent, a motif that is prevalent throughout his early works and beyond.

¹³ Gerber rightly considers *vera rel.* as the "height of Augustine's intellectual development and the expression of his *intellectus fidei* prior to his entrance into ecclesiastical service in the winter of 391" (p.182). He goes on to suggest that the role of the Spirit in *vera rel.* itself follows the development of Augustine's pneumatology: "Initially Augustine identifies the Spirit's creative *proprium* with *ordo* (though he does not explicate its meaning), and he does so within a triadic analysis of creation. Then, in the body of the treatise he elucidates this identification by portraying the Spirit as the agent of such order-related activities as preservation in form and composite harmony. Finally, Augustine crowns his 'crowning' early literary achievement with a robustly Trinitarian conclusion in which the Spirit's creative and redemptive operations coalesce" (pp.182-183).

¹⁴ Ayres writes that *vera rel.* includes a "new clarity about the Spirit's roles" and also that we "perhaps see the barest hints of Augustine's later understanding of the Spirit's role as the one who preserves the union of Father and Son" (p.63).

Similarly, the titles and roles of the Father as One and the Son as Wisdom are found in other earlier texts. While the Spirit's title as "Gift" is new to *On True Religion*, it can be found elsewhere in the text; it is present in the preface and later in the dazzling conclusion.¹⁵ On what grounds, then, is this passage worthy of attention? First, given the earlier connection between judgment and the Spirit in *Question 18*, this further exploration of that connection demonstrates that this is a feature of Augustine's pneumatology that is not only consistently present in his early works, but it is also one he is committed to developing. We see that development in an *unprecedented* move, which is the second reason this passage is so crucial: Augustine explicitly includes our capacity for judgment as part of the Spirit's redemptive work. We will explore this further below.

We now turn to the specific role of Son and Spirit in judgment in *On True Religion*. First, on the Son, Augustine writes the Christian is "re-formed by the Wisdom which is not formed but has formed all things" (12.24). When the Father granted existence to all things in Wisdom they were given their distinct "forms" (or natures), which is the basis for their particular place and role within creation. All things, in virtue of existing, already realise that nature, yet part of their development lies in more fully realising their potential. In the conclusion, Augustine specifies that it is also because all things were created in Wisdom that they "endeavour after unity" and Wisdom "alone achieves what all things seek after" (55.113). Judgments by Wisdom, then, consider created things in terms of how they can more fully realize their purpose in creation as originating from, and striving for, the unity of the Son. This role of the Son in creation, and so in judgment, remains constant throughout Augustine's works.

¹⁵ See Gerber, p. 185 and Ayres, *Trinity*, p. 63.

When we judge by Wisdom, Augustine argues, we judge by the same ‘standard’ as the Father. He makes this point in a later passage in *On True Religion* that parallels our passage in its Trinitarian structure and its quotation of 1 Corinthians 2:15:

[The Son] derives its existence not from itself but from the first and highest principle which is called The Father ‘from whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named’ (Eph 3:15). ‘The Father therefore judgeth no man, but hath given all judgment to the Son’ (John 15:22). ‘The spiritual man judgeth all things and is himself judged of none’ (1 Cor 2:15), that is by no man, but only by the law according to which he judges all things. Wherefore it is most truly said ‘we must all appear before the judgment throne of Christ’ (2 Cor. 5:10). He judges all things because he is above all when he is with God. He is with God when he knows most purely and loves what he knows with all charity.¹⁶

The argument of this passage is largely implicit in the connections Augustine draws between his four New Testament texts. All three persons of the Trinity are referred to and their work is specified with biblical verses. The Father is the creator of all human beings (Eph 3:15) who gives the role of judgment to the Son (John 15:22). While the Spirit is not explicitly mentioned, we can infer from the quotation from 1 Corinthians, which Augustine previously considered a pneumatological verse, that he is identifying the Spirit’s role in making us ‘spiritual’ (1 Corinthians 2:15). By the Spirit, we judge not by any material measure, but by the same ‘law’ as the Father: the Son. Indeed, the comprehensiveness of the spiritual man’s judgment (“judges all things”) lies in his judging by the very same ‘law’ as the Father who created all things. This does not exempt us entirely from being judged: the Father judges by the Son, and we judge by the Son--but we, too, ultimately, will be judged by Christ.¹⁷

¹⁶ *vera rel.* 31.58 (CCSL 32: 225) “...qua filius appellatur, quia non de se ipso est, sed de primo summoque principio, qui pater dicitur, *ex quo omnis paternitas in caelo et in terra nominatur*. Pater ergo non iudicat quemquam, sed omne iudicium dedit filio: et, *spiritalis homo iudicat omnia, ipse autem a nemine iudicatur*, id est a nullo homine, sed a sola ipsa lege, secundum quam iudicat omnia, quoniam et illud uerissime dictum est: *Oportet nos omnes exhiberi ante tribunal Christi*. Omnia ergo iudicat, quia super omnia est, quando cum Deo est. Cum illo est autem, quando purissime intellegit et tota caritate quod intellegit diligit.”

¹⁷ Later, in *Trin.*, Augustine will provide a different explanation of why the Father gives judgment to the Son. We can see him there guarding against a problem that is present in his account in *vera rel.* Certainly by saying that the Son is the ‘standard’ by which the Father judges, Augustine is holding together the inseparable operations of these two persons in judgment; the problem, however, is that this could be taken to mean that the Father has no judgment apart from the Son. Augustine discusses this issue especially in relation to the correct interpretation of 1 Corinthians 1:24 (“Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God”) in *Trin.* 5.

And now to the Spirit. Augustine writes that the Spirit's role in making us capable of judgment consists in "enjoy[ing] God through the Spirit, which is the Gift of God"; such enjoyment of God is in contrast to Augustine's claim, made a few sentences earlier, that part of our "undoing" lies in our "enjoying mortal things" (12.24). In order to understand the role of the Spirit in judgment, then, we must understand the role of enjoyment in judgment.

Augustine's clearest explication of enjoyment in *True Religion* comes with his favourite example of judgment, symmetry. Symmetry consists in the formation of parts into unity by their harmonious relation with one another; the standard of unity present to our minds, by which we are able to evaluate an object's symmetry, is the Son. Re-described for such aesthetic judgments, the Father is "the sole unity and principle of unity" and the Son "coincides with [unity] and is identical with it" (36.66). Whatever pleasure we take in created things' symmetry, then, lies *not* in the sensible, mutable object, but in the intelligible, eternal nature of God. God is both the cause of whatever unity the created thing can achieve and the standard by which we recognize that unity; indeed, God is the latter precisely because God is the former.

Most of us mistakenly think the created thing is the cause of our enjoyment. When we do so we have made two errors: first, we have severed the created thing's relation to God as its Creator, with the consequence that we no longer attend to it as a creature; second, we have failed to recognise Wisdom as the basis of our judgments, with the consequence that our capacity to judge is hampered and ultimately becomes corrupted. When we enjoy a created thing in this way, Augustine writes that we think of it as the "primal form, when in fact it was the lowest form of all" (21.40). In other words, some piece of creation becomes the basis by which we judge creation. This does not necessarily end in a reductive materialism, because of the power of the human imagination. We can construct an impressive metaphysic by taking what is available to our five senses and expanding it to fill the universe or shrinking it to

pervade all things (20.40). However, whether we become seduced by a crude materialism or a fantastical metaphysic, we will no longer be capable of judging by Wisdom and, therefore, we will no longer be able to perceive creation truthfully. Augustine suggests that those who do not judge creation by Wisdom, will perceive specific created things, or creation in general, as vain.¹⁸

By “enjoying God through the Spirit, which is the Gift of God”, our judgments again are based on our knowledge of Wisdom. Our discernment of a thing’s nature, and our approval of that nature, are grounded in the nature that is given to each thing by the Son. This corresponds to the other key passage that relates the Spirit and judgment in *True Religion*, in which Augustine writes, “[The spiritual man] judges all things because he is above all when he is with God. He is with God when he knows most purely and loves what he knows with all charity” (31.58). The “above all” in this passage suggests that we are no longer judging according to some creature or other, but that when we judge by Wisdom we are “above” creation. This work of the Spirit in uniting us to Wisdom by the love of God is a particular feature of its work in creation and redemption as described elsewhere in *True Religion*. Because all created things are made from nothing, in and of themselves they inherently return to nothingness. Later in the conclusion of *True Religion* he writes that the Spirit is the divine person by whom all things are “preserved in their bounds in safety” and, further, “abide in the good as far as they would or could” (55.112-13). There, he also characterises the Spirit as “supremely good” by which we are given “the possibility to be good, and...the power to abide in good as far as they would or could.” Several sentences later, in describing its role in redemption, Augustine writes that by the Spirit we “cleave” to God; the Spirit is the “Gift of his benignity by whom nothing that he made through the Word should perish, but should please and be reconciled to its Creator” and, finally, the one by whom “loving and enjoying

¹⁸ We will consider the contrast between judgment and vanity at greater length in chapter two.

whom we live in blessedness” (55.113). This dizzying array of descriptions all turn on the Spirit’s role in uniting created things with the Son so that they both exist and may flourish. In our passage, then, the capacity for judgment belongs to this perfecting work of the Spirit.¹⁹

On True Religion’s discussion of judgment is also crucial because it indicates a central exegetical text in Augustine’s understanding of pneumatology and judgment that we will encounter elsewhere, most notably in *Confessions* 13, 1 Corinthians 2:15 (“the spiritual man judges all things, but he himself is judged by no one”).²⁰ This text encapsulates for Augustine how by the activity of the Spirit we become capable of discerning a thing’s nature and evaluating it according to the Spirit’s work. It is worth quoting the context of the verse in Paul’s letter:

Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual. Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God’s Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually judged. Those who are spiritual judge all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else’s judgment. For who has known

¹⁹ James Wetzel defines judgment well: “God imparts value and significance to the world in the act of creating it, and in our evaluative judgments we seek to discover the substance of what God has imparted...we subsume the world we are given under the wisdom that has informed it and, like apprentice artisans, learn to discern the values of our crafts in the works of the master. These values are not themselves material things, yet neither are they immaterial things. Their reality emerges out of the act of significant creation, and they serve to enliven the physical world with intelligence”; see his *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) p. 22. Wetzel’s treatment of judgment, however, excludes any mention of the significance of God as Trinity either objectively in what God makes or subjectively in our capacity for judgment. As a result, Wetzel’s analysis of judgment in particular, and his argument throughout the book more generally, is far more blandly theistic than Trinitarian.

²⁰ Augustine’s use and interpretation of this verse may show the influence of his teacher Ambrose. Ambrose quotes 1 Corinthians 2:15 six times: *On Isaac* 2.4, *On the Gospel of Saint Luke* 7.148, *On the Holy Spirit* 3.6.37, *On the Sacrament of the Incarnation* .3, *epp.* 37.27, 59.4. His potential influence on Augustine’s use and interpretation of 1 Corinthians 2:15 can be detected in four ways. First, Augustine too most often quotes only the verse in isolation from its context to focus on “the spiritual man who judges all things, and he himself is judged by no man.” Second, Ambrose’s understanding of judgment also focuses on discerning a thing’s nature. As was the case with Solomon, who was a “spiritual man” because, in the famous story, he was able to distinguish the true mother from the false one and wisely resolve the dispute (see *On the Holy Spirit* 3.6.37). Third, Ambrose contrasts the spiritual man capable of judgment with the vain man enslaved to the material. As we will consider further in the next chapter, in *vera rel.* Augustine contrasts vanity and judgment (see *On Isaac* 2.4). Fourth, as Augustine does in *conf.* 13, Ambrose connects the judgment of the spiritual man with the image of God (*ibid.*). If we are right to see Ambrose’s influence in Augustine’s quotation of this verse, we also see Augustine’s typical development of his teacher’s insight. For whereas Ambrose only once connects 1 Corinthians 2:15 with the Holy Spirit--he suggests that Solomon saw which mother had true love for the child, and love is a gift of the Holy Spirit (*On the Holy Spirit* 3.6.37)--Augustine’s reading of the verse is thoroughly pneumatological.

the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:12-16)

We see that Augustine's understanding of judgment centred on the Spirit and the Son mirrors Paul's connection between "spiritual judgment" and the Christians' knowledge of "the mind of Christ." The first instance where 1 Corinthians 2:15 is quoted in *On True Religion*, as we saw above, we see that by judgment the "spiritual man" is capable of loving God and neighbour spiritually, *not* carnally: "the spiritual man" discerns the truth about human nature as made by God. The second instance it is quoted, the emphasis is on the second half of the verse: the "spiritual man" is "judged by no one". Paul is evidently establishing that "the spiritual man" possesses unique authority within the Church. Augustine takes this to mean that the "spiritual man" is not subject to the judgment of any other human being, but only to the final judgment of Christ. It is not clear whether Augustine thinks that the "spiritual man" is not subject to the judgment of others at all, or whether he is only subject to the judgment of others when they, too, judge by the "law" that is the Son. What is clear, however, is that on the basis of 1 Corinthians 2:15 Augustine regards the "spiritual man" as capable of comprehensive judgments which distinguish him from most of his fellows who are enslaved to the material.

In a later citation of this verse, in *Question 68* (ca. 396), Augustine focuses especially on how Paul is singling out a certain spiritual elite who, with their capacity for judgment, have insight that others lack. Augustine uses 1 Corinthians 2:15 to counter an interpretation of another Pauline verse (Romans 9:20: "O man who are you to answer back to God?") which some were taking as forbidding Christians from inquiring into God's saving work. Augustine argues that Paul is not prohibiting all such inquiry, but only those "who have not yet been rooted and grounded in love...so that they might be able to comprehend with the saints all the breadth, length, height, and depth, and the other things which he describes in the same passage (Ephesians 3:18-19)" (68.2). Augustine cites this quotation from Ephesians to

connect being “rooted and grounded in love” with the “comprehension of the saints.” The text used to demonstrate that the saints are free to inquire into the operation of God’s providence is 1 Corinthians 2:15. The central contrast is between those who remain earthly, and therefore ought not to inquire into the operation of God’s providence, and the spiritual, who may do so. In this case, Augustine quotes not only verse 15, but also verse 12. The difference arises because some, as Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 2:12, have “received the spirit of this world,” unlike those who have received “the Spirit who is of God.” Augustine further establishes this point with reference to friendship. The “spiritual man” has become a friend of God and may come to know God’s will. Notably, here, unlike in *On True Religion*, the Spirit’s role of uniting us to Wisdom is nowhere to be found. Instead, it is by the Spirit’s gift of love that we are made capable of judging in order that we may inquire into the operation of God’s providence.²¹

We come now to text to which we will return repeatedly in this chapter, *Confessions* 13. Before considering the passage on judgment, we again pause to note that *Confessions* 13 in general, and the passage on judgment in particular, is another neglected text in accounts of Augustine’s pneumatology. Prior to *The Trinity*, *Confessions* 13 stands out as Augustine’s most complete and well-developed pneumatology; it is a pneumatology in which Augustine identifies the Spirit’s role in making us capable of judgment.²² Ayres’ treatment of

²¹ *div. qu.* 68.2 (CCSL 44A: 176): “Non ergo prohibuit a quaerendo de quibus dicit: *Spiritualis autem omnia iudicat; ipse autem a nemine iudicatur*; et illud praecipue: *Nos autem non spiritum huius mundi accepimus, sed spiritum qui ex deo est, ut sciamus quae a deo donata sunt nobis*. Quos ergo prohibuit nisi luteos atque terrenos, qui nondum intrinsecus regenerati atque nutriti imaginem illius hominis portant, qui primus factus est de terra terrenus, et quia ei a quo factus est noluit obtemperare, in id lapsus est unde factus est, meruitque post peccatum audire: *Terra es, et in terram ibis*? Talibus igitur hominibus dicit apostolus: *O homo, tu quis es, qui respondeas deo? Numquid dicit figmentum ei qui se finxit: Quare sic me fecisti?* Quamdiu ergo figmentum es, nondum perfectus filius, -- quia nondum hausisti plenissimam gratiam, qua nobis data est potestas filios dei fieri, quo possis audire: *Iam non dicam vos servos sed amicos*; -- tu quis es, qui respondeas deo et uelis dei nosse consilium, qui si hominis tibi aequalis nosse uoluisses, imprudenter faceres, nisi prius in amicitiam recipereris? Sicut ergo portauimus imaginem terreni, portemus et imaginem caelestis, exuentes nos ueterem hominem et induentes nouum, ut non dicatur nobis quasi luteo figmento: *Numquid dicit figmentum ei qui se finxit: Quare sic me fecisti?*”

²² Certainly Gerber cannot be faulted for not including *conf. 13* as it lies well outside the time-frame of his study. While Ayres himself notes its importance, and bemoans the partial treatment it has received, in *Augustine and the Trinity* he focuses almost entirely on the image of God in us (being, knowing and willing) at *conf. 13.11.12*.

Confessions 13 focuses on how (and why) the *imago dei* marks a significant development in Augustine's "analogical practice" (134). He notes that despite Augustine's use of triads as descriptors for our intellectual life occurring as early as *The Soliloquies*, *Confessions* 13 is the first instance in which such a triad is taken to be an analogy for the Trinity (see 134-138). Thus *Confessions* 13 is of historical interest because of how it prepares for, and anticipates, Augustine's more developed (and much criticised) "analogical practice" in *The Trinity*. Ayres' treatment of the background to this passage in the context of Augustine's thought is impressive and of great service to readers of Augustine. However, by confining his focus to 13.11.12, Ayres treats the image of God in *Confessions* 13 without addressing how Augustine describes the renewal of that image in us at 13.22.32;²³ with that renewal comes our capacity for judgment.

The importance of judgment could not be more emphatically established than it is in *Confessions* 13 in which we are told that it is by judgment that we fulfil our human vocation; our ability to "judge all things", as described in 1 Corinthians 2:15, is the means by which we exercise our God-given dominion over creation. Further, Augustine specifies that this

Ayres is well aware that much that is neglected in *conf.13* is deserving of further study. A quotation from *conf.13* movingly concludes his Introduction. He writes, "If our historical work is of value in the struggle to understand what we believe then it is so as both our work and that of the Spirit"; he then goes on to quote 13.31.46, a passage we will consider at length in our third section, which begins, "When people see [your works] with the help of your Spirit, it is you who are seeing in them." While it serves as a profound way to conclude his Introduction, disappointingly Ayres does not return to it in the body of the work to flesh out its significance for Augustine's pneumatology, other than in a footnote in which he refers to the passage as describing how "any recognition of truth and appropriate delight is also God recognizing and delighting in us" (p. 164 n74). This despite the fact that in an article published following *Augustine and the Trinity* he also quotes 13.31.46 and introduces it as "a powerful and yet rarely noted section toward the end of Augustine's *Confessions*"; his analysis of the passage in relation to Augustine's pneumatology is brief and lacking in detail: "For Augustine, Paul teaches that at the heart of Christian life is the presence of God--Father, Son, and Spirit--infusing love, being love, giving grace, and transforming and restoring us into those who love God and will contemplate and share in the divine life"; see, 'Augustine', in *The Blackwell Companion to Paul*, ed. by Stephen Westerholm (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp. 345-360 (p.355).

²³ In *Augustine and the Trinity* he briefly discusses Augustine's citation of 1 Corinthians 2:15 in order to further substantiate his claim that the analogy with being, knowing and willing functions because "the mind is exercised in part by being taught how far distant it is from understanding" (pp. 140-141). He emphasizes, then, that the person who 'judges all things' "does not attempt to judge the Scripture, the firmament placed above us" (p. 140). As well, he refers to 13.23.33 as a "classic discussion" of the "spiritual" as those who are "most able to follow Augustine's speculative flights" (p. 164 n74). Both of these brief comments fail to engage with this passage's significance for Augustine's pneumatology.

capacity to “judge all things” comes when the image of God has been renewed in us, thus giving us “insight into whatever concerns the Spirit of God” (23.33). We see again the two sides of judgment: as we are ordered by the Spirit of God within so we can discern that order present in creation--and only then are we prepared to exercise our dominion over creation by judgment.

Augustine describes our capacity for judgment, quoting 1 Corinthians 2:15, at the climax of *Confessions* 13, when he interprets the creation of human beings on the sixth day as the renewal of the image of God in us. We quote this remarkable passage at length:

Our attachment to this world brought us to death's door by evil living; but see, O Lord, our God and creator, once the soul has controlled its hankering for worldly things, and has begun to revive by living a good life, and that word which you spoke through your apostle has become a reality in it: 'Shape yourselves no longer to the standards of this world,' something else followed, for you immediately added, 'but allow yourselves to be reformed by the renewal of your minds' (Romans 12:2). You did not say 'reformed according to your kind,' as though imitating some neighbour who has gone ahead, or taking some better person as the norm for your lives. No, for you, O God, did not say, 'Let there be man, according to his kind, but, 'Let us make man according to our image and likeness,' for you meant us to discern your will for ourselves. Such was your steward's aim in urging, 'Allow yourselves to be reformed by the renewal of your minds, that you may be able to discern what is God's will, what is good and pleasing to him and perfect,' (Romans 12:2) for while he had begotten children through the gospel he did not want them to remain for ever babies whom he must feed on milk and care for like a nurse.

This is why you do not say, 'let there be man,' but, 'Let us make...; nor do you say, 'according to his kind,' but, 'according to our image and likeness'. A mind thus made new considers your truth and understands it. He does not need some other human being to explain it to him so that he may imitate his own kind; you explain it to him, so that he can discern for himself what is your will (*voluntas tua*), what is good and pleasing to you and perfect (Romans 12:2). And since he now has the capacity to understand, you teach him to contemplate the Trinity in Unity, the Unity that is Trinity....In this way man is renewed in the knowledge of God in accordance with the image of his creator. He becomes a spiritual person, fit to judge of any matters that call for judgment, though he himself is not subject to the judgment of his fellows.²⁴

²⁴ *conf.* 13.22.32 (CCSL 27: 260-261): “Ecce enim, domine deus noster, creator noster, cum cohibitae fuerint affectiones ab amore saeculi, quibus moriebamur male uiuendo, et coeperit esse anima uiuens bene uiuendo completumque fuerit uerbum tuum, quo per apostolum tuum dixisti: *Nolite conformari huic saeculo*, consequetur et illud, quod adiunxisti statim et dixisti: *Sed reformamini in nouitate mentis uestrae*, non iam secundum genus, tamquam imitantes praecedentem proximum nec ex hominis melioris auctoritate uiuentes. Neque enim dixisti: *Fiat homo secundum genus*, sed: *Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram*, ut nos probemus, quae sit uoluntas tua. Ad hoc enim dispensator ille tuus generans per euangelium filios, ne semper paruulos haberet, quos lacte nutrirer et tamquam nutrix foueret: *Reformamini*, inquit, *in nouitate mentis uestrae ad probandum uos, quae sit uoluntas dei, quod bonum et beneplacitum et perfectum*.

This passage describes the same transformation as the passage we quoted above in *Question 68*: from our being worldly, and therefore incapable of understanding, to becoming spiritual, and therefore capable of judgment. Whereas in *Question 68* the transformation was from being in the image of the old, earthly Adam to the new, heavenly Adam, in *Confessions 13* it is the transformation from the imitation of fellow human beings to ‘imaging’ God. We will return to the role of imitation below when we consider judgment and ethics; we will first examine the two key New Testament texts in this passage.

Augustine’s pairing of Romans 12:2 and 1 Corinthians 2:15 to interpret the creation of human beings in Genesis is the key to understanding this passage. Romans 12:2 serves as a refrain as Augustine gradually unfurls the full meaning of the verse by quoting different parts of it three times, developing his account of the renewal of the image of God in us. First he quotes only the first half of the verse (“Shape yourselves no longer to the standards of this world, but allow yourselves to be reformed by the renewal of your minds”) in order to describe the transformation from being conformed to the world to being reformed in the image of God; next he quotes the entire verse (adding “what is good and pleasing to him and perfect”) to describe how when we are reformed by the image of God we can, for ourselves, discern God’s will; he then repeats the second half of the verse again, prior to quoting 1 Corinthians 2:15, in order to establish that this discernment of God’s will is *the basis for judgment* by which we exercise our dominion (as he will go on to discuss).

Ideoque non dicis: Fiat homo, sed: *Faciamus*, nec dicis: secundum genus, sed: *ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram*. Mente quippe renouatus et conspiciens intellectam ueritatem tuam homine demonstratore non indiget, ut suum genus imitetur, sed te demonstrante probat ipse, quae sit uoluntas tua, quod bonum et beneplacitum et perfectum, et doces eum iam capacem uidere trinitatem unitatis uel unitatem trinitatis. Ideoque pluraliter dicto: *Faciamus hominem*, singulariter tamen infertur: *Et fecit deus hominem*, et pluraliter dicto: *ad imaginem nostram*, singulariter infertur: *ad imaginem dei*. Ita homo renouatur in agnitione dei secundum imaginem eius, qui creauit eum, et spiritalis effectus iudicat omnia, quae utique iudicanda sunt, ipse autem a nemine iudicatur.”

Augustine's focus in this passage is on the image of the Triune God in human beings and so the individual persons are not referred to explicitly; we can, however, detect pneumatological overtones if we inquire into his reading of "God's will" in Romans 12:2. God's will refers not merely to God's intention for creation; it is a title for the Holy Spirit. Gerber suggests the potential influence of Ambrose on Augustine's treatment of God's will, though, as he notes, if the influence is there, then Augustine is improving on his teacher, since Ambrose never explicitly identifies the Spirit with God's will.²⁵

There are three examples of the Spirit as God's will in *Confessions* 13.²⁶ First, Augustine famously describes the Triune image in us (for the first time) as consisting of being, knowing and willing. The Holy Spirit corresponds to the human will. Second, Augustine describes God's own Triune life thus: "you unchangeably exist, unchangeably know and unchangeably will" (13.16.19). Third, and most crucially for our purposes, immediately after Augustine quotes Genesis 1:2 ("...and the Spirit was borne over the waters"), he refers to the Spirit as "your unassailable, immutable will, sufficient in itself unto itself." He continues to describe how God's will "brood[s] over the life you had made, over

²⁵ Gerber, p176 n104.

²⁶ Augustine's identification of the Spirit as God's will is a possibility he had been playing with for some time. In *Gn. adv. Man.* (388/389) he compared the Spirit's place over the waters in Genesis 1:2 to the will of a craftsman over his works; in other words, the Spirit God stands above creation ready to realise God's intention for it (1.5.8; the comparison is made again at 1.7.12). He also discusses God's will earlier in that text where he argues that just as we cannot know a human being's will apart from friendship with them, so we cannot learn God's will in creating without loving obedience to him (1.2.4). Olivier Du Roy reads these two passages as Augustine concluding, first, that the Spirit is God's will and, second, that God's will is love; see *L'Intelligence de la foi en la Trinite selon S. Augustin* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1966), pp. 271-272. It seems to me that is an anachronistic over-reading of the text. Augustine does not say that the Spirit is God's will, he *compares* the Spirit to a human will. As well, while he says you cannot know a person's will apart from friendship with them, he does not say that God's will is love. While these connections will certainly become clearer later, as we see in *conf.13*, I read some hesitancy in these connections in *Gn. adv. Man.* In which case, we see Augustine staying much closer to Ambrose's use of the term in his earlier years, before making such a bold (pneumatological) innovation later. This seems to me to be confirmed when in his next commentary on Genesis, *Gn. litt. imp.*, Augustine entertains three possible readings for why the Spirit is "borne over" the waters: (1) he reiterates the comparison between the Spirit and the craftsman's will; alternately he says it could refer to (2) the Platonic world-soul; (3) or finally the 'air' that is above the waters. It seems to me the variety of other options Augustine entertains suggest that he has not yet settled on the association between the Spirit and God's will, nor is he certain that is the best way to interpret Genesis 1.2 (16). *Conf.13*, then, does mark a new confidence in the identification of the Spirit as God's will. It may perhaps be tied to another key development in *conf.13*: the *imago dei* as lying in being, knowing, willing; see below n15. Ayres does not consider the Spirit as God's will in *conf.13*, though he does do so in *Trin.* 3 and elsewhere; see p. 191.

the creature for which life is not the same as beatitude...but it has the prospect of being converted to him who made it, that so it may live more and more fully on the fount of life, and in his light see light, and so be perfected, illumined and beatified” (13.4.5). God’s will, then, is his creative agency at work on his creation, bringing it to flourish. Whereas God’s will is “unassailable, immutable...sufficient in itself unto itself”, creation only attains blessedness by a process; a process that depends on the activity of God’s will. When we can discern this will, we are capable of judgment because we have insight into God’s purposes for creation.²⁷

The adjectives that follow “God’s will” in Romans 12:2 (“what is good and pleasing to him and perfect”) also appear in pneumatological contexts elsewhere in *Confessions* 13. Augustine introduces the “good (*bonus*)” Spirit’s role in creation by describing how, out of the abundance of his goodness, God not only grants existence to what would otherwise *not be*, God also desires created things “to be perfected (*perficiantur*)” in order that they might become “pleasing (*placeant*)” to God. As well, Augustine describes how, when we recognise that a created thing is “good (*bona*),” we do so by the Spirit, so that “whatever created things please them for your sake (*propter te placent*), it is you who are pleasing them in these things (*tu in eis places*); and anything that pleases us (*placent nobis*) through your Spirit, pleases you in us (*tibi placent in nobis*).” We will return to this remarkable passage below. At this point, we simply note that the adjectives “good”, “pleasing” and “perfect” describe the Spirit’s work in creation. This provides further evidence that Augustine reads Romans 12:2 pneumatologically.²⁸

²⁷ Ayres concludes that there are two adaptations that Augustine makes to the triad of intellectual life, which has clear precedents earlier in Plotinus and Victorinus: “first, adding willing/loving as a key term and then, second, focusing on the mind’s act as intellectual life as the site for his own analogical investigations” (p.136). Later he also writes: “It seems likely that Augustine’s developing sense of the Son as intellect/wisdom and the Spirit as love played a significant role in shaping the analogical triads he finds in mental life” (p.138). I would further suggest that the Spirit *as will* also likely contributed to the “shaping” of those triads.

²⁸ In our next chapter we will focus on another earlier quotation of Romans 12:2, in *mor.*, which also has strong pneumatological resonance.

We also see that in this passage on judgment, Augustine precedes his third reference to our discernment of God's will with a description of how one renewed in the image of God "considers [God's] truth and understands it." As was the case with will, so it is with truth: this is a title for a Trinitarian person, the Son. Later in *Confessions* 13 Augustine will write: "I do not believe I could speak truthfully under inspiration from anyone other than you, since you are the Truth" (25.38). Elsewhere in *Confessions* 13 Augustine addresses God as "O Truth speaking Light" (6.7), "o my Light, my Truth" (24.36), and "Truth itself" (29.44). This relation of God's Truth and God's Will parallels Augustine's earlier description of how God's Will perfects creation. Above we saw the Spirit as God's Will borne over the waters perfects creation when it is "converted to him who made it, that so it may live more and more fully on the fount of life, and in his light see light, and so be perfected, illumined and beatified." Later in our text, Augustine explicitly identifies the "fount of life" as "your Word, O God" (13.21.31). We might say, then, that God's Will perfects creation by realising his purposes for it in God's Knowledge, the Truth.

The capacity to discern God at work in creation then leads to an understanding of God's eternal nature. Thus Augustine writes in our passage that the renewal of the image of God in us involves understanding of both (to use contemporary parlance) the immanent and economic Trinities. This understanding precedes Augustine's quotation of 1 Corinthians 2:15. We are capable of exercising judgment because we are able to see creation in relation to the Triune God; spiritual Christians no longer see creation in terms of a purely material or subjective horizon; they see the truth of creation, because they have glimpsed the truth about God as Father, Son and Spirit.

Augustine then describes how we exercise our dominion over creation by judgment. He again underlines the relation between pneumatology and judgment, when he writes that those renewed by the image of God have "insight into whatever concerns the Spirit of God"

(23.33). Further, he indicates the purpose of this judgment when he specifies that the spiritual Christian ought only to exercise judgment “in areas where he also has the power to correct what is wrong” (23.34). With these two quotations we see that judgment turns on our capacity for discerning the work of the Spirit, and it enables us, by correction, to participate in the Spirit’s perfecting work. We will consider judgment and correction briefly in our section on judgment and ethics, and at greater length in chapter three on other-judgment. At this point we note that judgment is the means by which human beings care for creation; that care only helps to realise God’s purposes for creation when the Spirit acts in us to discern the Spirit’s work.²⁹

Our dominion, however, is limited. Just as human’s dominion is not expansive in Genesis, so Christians’ exercise of judgment is not all-encompassing. We are not given free rein to pronounce on all we survey. Augustine excludes us from judging that of which we either cannot adequately know or to which we are inferior. We do not judge angels, then, whose nature is superior and largely unknowable to us, nor Scripture, to which we are to submit ourselves. Further, we are not to attempt to distinguish between true Christians and false, nor to make predictions about the ultimate destiny of those outside the Church. The principle that we ought only to exercise judgment where we also have “the power to correct” indicates the clear boundaries of our dominion.

Augustine identifies two subjects for the spiritual Christian to judge: first, the life and teaching of the Church and, second, the actions of Christians. In his *Commentary*, James O’Donnell takes Augustine’s description of judgment of the life and teaching of the Church

²⁹ Roland Teske concludes that there are “two necessary conditions” for the judgment described in *conf.*13: “first, that one is in the church and, second, that one is adept at Neoplatonic spiritualism”; see Teske, ‘Homo Spiritualis in the Confessions’, in *Augustine: From Rhetor to Theologian*, ed. by Joanne McWilliam (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1992) pp. 67-76 (p.71). While one cannot deny the influence of a Neoplatonic account of spiritual substance on Augustine (certainly Augustine himself makes that influence clear in *conf.*7), equally we have demonstrated that this judgment is concerned with a distinctly *Christian* Platonic account of the Triune activity, especially the Spirit, in creation.

to refer exclusively to the “activities of the bishop” (13.23.34).³⁰ Certainly the activities they judge have an episcopal ring to them:

He judges and approves what is right and disapproves what is wrong, whether in the solemn rite of the sacraments at the initiation of those whom your mercy searches out ‘in many waters’ [*baptism*], or in that rite celebrated when there is offered the Fish, which was raised from the deep to be the food of the devout ‘earth’ [*eucharist*], or when considering the verbal signs and expressions which are subject to the authority of your book, like birds flying beneath the firmament. He must assess interpretations, expositions, discourses, controversies, the forms of blessing and prayer to you [*doctrine, worship, and prayer*]. (23.34; Chadwick)³¹

Yet Augustine also stresses the capacity for judgment belongs to *all* spiritual Christians; it would certainly seem to contradict his emphasis that all spiritual Christians are capable of judgment if he then went on to describe judgment as exclusive to bishops only. There is a role in both areas for spiritual Christians, then, whether they are bishops or not. Augustine writes that “the spiritual, whether they rule or obey, judge in the light of the Spirit” (23.33). His point seems to be that whereas the carnal Christians obey out of submission to authority, those spiritual Christians who do not exercise authority themselves obey with a knowledge of why authority is right. As well, as we will see in our third chapter, elsewhere Augustine is clear that the authority and duty to judge and correct a fellow Christian when he has sinned is an essential feature of neighbour-love.³²

More specifically in terms of the activities Augustine details in the above quotation, we see that he is applying his earlier allegorical interpretations of the animals over which human beings have dominion to explicate the nature of spiritual Christians’ judgment. In this instance, spiritual Christians are capable of exercising spiritual judgment because they

³⁰ James J. O’Donnell, Augustine, *Confessions: Volume 3, Commentary on Books 8-13* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

³¹ *conf.* 13.23.34 (CCSL 27: 262): “Iudicat enim et approbat, quod recte, improbat autem, quod perperam inuenerit, siue in ea solemnitate sacramentorum, quibus initiantur quos peruestigat in aquis multis misericordia tua, siue in ea, qua ille piscis exhibetur, quem leuatum de profundo terra pia comedit, siue in uerborum signis uocibusque subiectis auctoritati libri tui tamquam sub firmamento uolitantibus, interpretando, exponendo, disserendo, disputando, benedicendo atque inuocando te, ore erumpentibus atque sonantibus signis, ut respondeat populus: Amen.”

³² Teske is in agreement with me on this point (pp. 68-69).

understand the teaching of the Church and the purposes of its rites. Whereas earlier, Augustine had described how the carnal Christian's attention is grabbed by the engaging, outward form of the Church's rites, the spiritual Christian is able to distinguish, as it were, sign and thing. Thus immediately after describing the spiritual Christian's judgment in this area, Augustine argues that if it had not been for Adam's fall

then there would have been no need for the deeds performed and words spoken by your stewards...words and deeds material and sensible, yet fraught with sacramental power...even though people have been baptized and initiated, and have submitted to these material sacraments, they would proceed no further, did their souls not rise to a new level of spiritual life, and move on from elementary doctrine toward maturity. (13.20.28)

The capacity to exercise judgment over the Church's life and teaching depends on such "maturity" which sees beyond the "material and sensible."³³

We have uncovered, then, the centrality of *Confessions* 13 to Augustine's pneumatology, especially with respect to the relation between the Spirit and judgment. By the renewal of the image of God in us, we become capable of judgment, by which we exercise our dominion; we saw that judgment comes when we can discern God's will, the Spirit at work perfecting all things, which it does inseparably with God's knowledge, the Truth, in whom all things are given their nature. Further, we are made capable of judgment by the Spirit, and with judgment we participate in the Spirit's work of perfecting creation.

We conclude this section on pneumatology and judgment with *The Trinity* 9. Augustine there argues that a helpful analogy for understanding why the Spirit proceeds and is not begotten is the role of the human will in judgment and action. Further, as several

³³ Elsewhere, Augustine also describes how by their judgment spiritual Christians (also citing 1 Corinthians 2:15) recognise that the unity of the Church lies in union with God and not in any one particular individual or group, so that they are not convinced by heretics or schismatics (*en. Ps.* 103-3.5); they exercise leadership and care for carnal Christians by not disrupting the unity of the Church by slandering their fellow Christians (*en. Ps.* 49.27). Further, this spiritual judgment equips them to understand the nature of prayer (*Jo. ev. tr.* 102.4) and be capable of preaching (*en. Ps.* 103-1.16).

scholars have persuasively argued recently,³⁴ the latter half of *The Trinity* is not only establishing analogies for the Trinity within our intellectual life, but also brilliantly describing how, to quote Rowan Williams, “our thinking about the Trinity is inseparably bound up with the very process of our sanctification.”³⁵ For our purposes, then, Augustine is both establishing an analogy between the activity of the Spirit and our will in judgment and action, and also pointing to the role of the Spirit in transforming the will to make it capable of judgment and ethical action. So this text too, in an even more emphatic way, demonstrates what we have seen since *Question 18*: that Augustine inseparably binds together pneumatology and judgment.

In *The Trinity* 9, the mind’s activity is described as its ‘conception’ of mental words.³⁶ This vocabulary establishes an analogy between the life of the Trinity, particularly the second person as the divine Word, and our knowledge of things; this analogy is new to us, but the description of it, which includes judgment, is familiar. In order for the mind to make judgments, it must do so by “that eternal truth according to which all temporal things were made the form (*formam*) to which we are and according to which we do anything with true and right reason, either in ourselves or in bodies” (9.2.12). As we have seen repeatedly, the Son’s role as the basis of right judgments lies in his role as the One in whom all things were made. Then follows the analogy: when our mind looks to that Truth we “conceive true knowledge of things (*conceptam rerum veracem notitiam*), which we have with us as a kind of word that we beget by uttering inwardly, and that does not depart from us when it is born” (9.7.12). When we communicate our approval or disapproval (*approbantur vel improbantur*)

³⁴ Rowan Williams work on this subject is definitive and highly influential; see ‘*Sapientia* and the Trinity: Reflections on *De Trinitate*’, in *Collectanea Augustiniana* (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1990), pp. 317-332 and ‘*De Trinitate*’, in *Augustine Through the Ages*, pp. 845-851. Luigi Gioia has applied Williams approach to *Trin.* in his commentary on the whole work, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine’s De Trinitate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

³⁵ Williams, “*De Trinitate*”, p. 846.

³⁶ My understanding of these difficult passages is indebted to Gioia’s clear interpretation of them, pp. 200-205.

to others, whether by words or gestures, these are merely means of externalizing the mental word. This approval or disapproval itself indicates that our minds have interacted with some objective standard by which this ‘conception’ of mental words occurs (9.7.12).

Mental words arise, then, from “loved knowledge” (*amata notitia*) (9.10.15). The analogy of conception, whatever we may think of its success within the larger argument of *The Trinity*, vividly establishes how knowledge arises from the mind’s *relations*. Knowledge does not come from some straight-forward encounter between a passive subject and a world of bare facts. As Augustine argues repeatedly, our knowledge always arises from desire; our attention is oriented by love. The character of our love, then, shapes how we represent and interpret the world; or, in more common parlance, the value we place on things. So Augustine specifies that the mental-word is conceived by two different loves: love for the unchanging God or covetousness for the changing creature. The question is whether our love is ‘referred’ to God, or to the creature (*si ad creatorem refertur*). If our knowledge of creatures is conceived with ‘reference’ to God, then it is worthy of the name love (*amor*); if it is conceived with ‘reference’ to the creature, then Augustine denotes it as covetousness (*cupiditas*) (9.10.15). The language of ‘referring’ gives a broader sense to the conception of mental words. Whereas the discussion of approving or disapproving by truth can be read narrowly as the process of looking to a standard by which we judge, the language of ‘referring’ more broadly points to how the mind ‘makes sense’ of the world by linking one concept to another and thus establishing a broader nexus of meaning. Thinking always involves such ‘referring’. And so, in short, these two loves determine whether or not we attend to all things as only ‘making sense’ in relation to the eternal and good purposes of God, known to us in his Son, the Truth, or in relation to some contingent creature.³⁷

³⁷ Paul Griffiths summarises the significance of this discussion well: “The upshot...is that for Augustine theoretical error is typically (perhaps always) a product of the will. A judgment brought to birth along with a covetous desire requires that what is known, though known accurately insofar as it is known at all, is, because of the weight of cupidity, placed under the sign of self-interested desire, and as a result misconstrued, increasingly

This conceived word, however, has not yet been born. Augustine distinguishes between the conceived-word that first arises from in our minds' activity in thinking, and the born-word which lives and breathes within our minds' on going thought. It is by love "either for sinning or doing good" that the mind "embraces" the conceived-word and brings it to birth. The conceived-words denote particular representations that combine to form our interpretation of the order of the world; the born-words denote our love of those particular representations. In other words, the conceived-word includes some estimation of the value of a thing, and the born-word is tied to our affirmation of that representation in our subsequent action. When we love creatures apart from God, the development from conception to birth is the transition from wanting to getting. Our covetous desire esteems money as of supreme value and therefore we are not satisfied until we have lots of it. With our love of God, however, which esteems spiritual things, "the will is pleased in the act of knowing (*voluntas in ipsa notitia conquiescit*)". That is, the very loving knowledge of justice, to use the example Augustine gives, is itself the enjoyment of justice; and we are made just by that (9.14).

The analogy between the action of our will in love and the procession of the Spirit turns on how both our will and the Spirit are involved in 'conception' *and* 'embrace' of the Word. That is, our will is determined both by the desire by which in judgment we formed our representations of things (conception of the mental word) and the 'embrace (*amplectitur*)' of that representation in our subsequent thought and action (birth of the mental word). The will, then, is both part of the process by which knowledge arises by judgment, and is also essential to that knowledge's continued presence to the mind. This analogy establishes that the Spirit

and with passionate depth, as something of independent interest and worth. As that mistake occurs, it perpetuates and deepens itself until the object of desire becomes increasingly obscured by misjudgments produced by disordered love. Finally, the mist of error is all that remains, but it is a mist stirred by the will, ontologically empty but capable nonetheless of diverting attention from the eternal truths, and as a result producing cognitive error, misjudgment"; see his 'How Reasoning Goes Wrong: A Quasi-Augustinian Theory of Error', in *Reason and the Reasons of Faith*, ed. by Paul J. Griffiths and Reinhard Hütter (New York & London: T & T Clark, 2005), pp. 145-159 (p. 156).

cannot be referred to as begotten because it is also involved in conception (9.12.18). The persuasiveness of this analogy, and its success within the argument of *The Trinity*, are not at issue for us; instead the very fact that an essential part of the analogy is the will's role in judgment demonstrates for us the consistent significance of pneumatology and judgment in Augustine's mature thought. The connection between the Spirit and judgment began in 389 with Augustine's Trinitarian reading of the three rhetorical questions and it remains later in approximately 414-418 as part of his attempt to answer the question of why the Spirit "proceeds."

II. Judgment and Ethics

We will now turn to the second focus of this chapter: the relationship between judgment and ethics. The role of judgment in Augustine's ethics has two aspects that correspond to the two senses of judgment. First, judgment as discernment of a thing's nature is essential to the process by which the Spirit orders our loves to conform to the reality of God's creation. Apart from ordering our loves, we cannot act ethically. As Augustine writes in *City of God 15* (hereafter *City*) "it seems to me that a brief and true definition of virtue is 'rightly ordered love'" (15.22).³⁸ Second, judgment as evaluation is a means by which we participate in the Spirit's work: either in its perfecting work when we judge and seek to correct others (or ourselves) or in the affirmation of what is good in creation.

First, then, we look to the relation between judgement as discernment of a thing's nature and the ordering of our loves. A late statement on the nature of judgment will serve to orient us in our subsequent texts. In *City 11*, Augustine contrasts the "freedom of judgment" with alternate subjective measures of the value of created things. He writes:

When it comes to free exercise of judgment, evidently, the considered exercise of judgment has the advantage over the pressure of need or the satisfaction of wants. For

³⁸ Augustine goes on to quote from Song of Songs 2:4 'Set charity in order in me'. For Augustine's use of this verse see A.-M. la Bonnadiere, 'Le Cantique des Cantiques dans S. Augustin,' *REA*, 1 (1955), 225-37. Oliver O'Donovan adds two further references to the verse than Bonnadiere identifies: *civ. Dei* 20.21 and a sermon, which was unpublished at the time of la Bonnadiere's article, s. 65A. See O'Donovan, *Problem*, p. 175n68.

reason considers what value a thing has in itself, as part of the order of nature, whereas the logic of urgent need is that of means to ends. Reason considers what appears to be true according to the light of the mind, whereas the goal of satisfaction is that of agreeable indulgence of the bodily senses (Translation mine).³⁹

We ought to note immediately that Augustine is not here refusing need and want any roles as determinants of value. He says earlier in this same chapter that in certain contexts we are right to prefer a horse to a man (11.16); and later in Book 11 he will write that food, drink and the light of the sun give us pleasure when we use them rightly (11.22). The problem arises when need or want is the exclusive determinant of value. The contrast with judgment indicates why: whereas by judgment we can recognize the value a thing has as a creature within the relations of all creation, in the case of need such value is entirely contextual; whereas by judgment we recognize that value by reason, in the case of want it is determined entirely by the senses. We will have occasion to consider need and want further below, but suffice it to say now that whereas judgement opens us up to the objective value things have in God's creation, need and want establish alternate bases for value that may or may not be consistent with their objective value. When the "free exercise of judgment" grounds our action, then, we may act in conformity with creation as known and loved by God.

In addition to contrasting judgment with necessity and pleasure in *City* 11, Augustine also contrasts judgment with imitation in *Confessions* 13. As we saw above, Augustine regards it as especially significant in Genesis that human beings are created in the image of God, while all other creatures are made "according to their kind". He interprets this as a reference to the way Christians who are not capable of judgment, but who desire to act rightly, do so by imitating wise Christians. Specifically the "living creature" of the sixth day of creation refers to Christians who cease from acting to satisfy their lusts as they begin to

³⁹ *civ. Dei* 11.16 (CCSL 48: 336): "Ita libertate iudicandi plurimum distat ratio considerantis a necessitate indigentis seu uoluptate cupientis, cum ista quid per se ipsum in rerum gradibus pendat, necessitas autem quid propter quid expetat cogitat, et ista quid uerum luci mentis appareat, uoluptas uero quid iucundum corporis sensibus blandiatur spectat."

exercise self-control; they do so by “imitating those who imitate your Christ” (13.21.31).⁴⁰

Imitation is contrasted with judgment, but it is a definite step in the direction towards being capable of judgment.⁴¹

How so? Augustine answers this question in a work written eight years earlier, *On the Usefulness of Believing*, in which he describes how the imitation of wise Christians is a means by which the foolish submit themselves to the authority of the Church in order to become wise themselves. And so in *Confessions* 13 Augustine refers to such imitation of the “living creature” as submission to authority (13.34.49). In *On the Usefulness of Believing* he argues that just as our minds are cleansed by believing first in order that we may understand, so our actions are purified by imitating others before we can decide how to act for ourselves: “The wise man, so far as it is given to him, imitates God. The foolish has nothing nearer to him for his wholesome imitation than the wise man.”⁴² Thus before we have developed the capacity to judge for ourselves according to God’s Wisdom, we have that Wisdom mediated to us by those who embody it for us.⁴³ Wisdom takes on flesh and provides us an example to follow in the lives of our fellow Christians. By such imitation we are oriented by an alternate determinate of action other than what satisfies our ego; while we are not yet prepared to

⁴⁰ Augustine refers to lust in terms of the three lusts of 1 John 2:15, to which our next chapter is devoted.

⁴¹ Much of Augustine’s criticism of his education in *conf.* and of the Roman theatre in *civ. Dei* consists in observing what destructive examples were provided for imitation by those different institutions. Part of the contradictory nature of his early education was that he was praised for a literary assignment in which he mimicked Juno (*conf.* 1.18.28), but he was punished for acting like the figures he watched at the theatre (*ibid.* 1.19.30). His teachers failed to turn the power of imitation to a positive end. Similarly the Roman theatre breeds immorality because “human infirmity cannot be restrained from the perpetration of damnable deeds for as long as a seemingly divine authority is given to the imitation of such deeds” (*civ. Dei* 4.1). In contrast Augustine later suggests how in the Incarnation Christ fashions an example for imitation of a recognizably human life (*ibid.* 9.15), but one that did not succumb to temptation (*ibid.* 9.21).

⁴² *util. cred.* 15.33 (PL 42): “Cum enim sapiens sit Deo ita mente coniunctus, ut nihil interponatur quod separet; Deus enim est veritas; nec ullo pacto sapiens quisquam est, si non veritatem mente contingat: negare non possumus inter stultitiam hominis et sincerissimam Dei veritatem medium quiddam interpositam esse hominis sapientiam. Sapiens enim, quantum datum est, imitatur Deum; homini autem stulto, ad imitandum salubriter, nihil est homine sapiente propinquius.”

⁴³ We see an example of this in Augustine’s own conversion. Simplicianus told Augustine of Victorinus, the famed rhetorician and translator of the “books of the Platonists”, who eventually was publicly baptized despite initial resistance. The example of Victorinus, someone Augustine already greatly admired, confronted him with the next step he had to take in his own life. As he writes, after he heard Simplicianus tell the story of Victorinus, “I was fired to imitate [him]” (8.4.9).

discern for ourselves how we ought to act according to Wisdom, by friendship we are initiated into so doing.⁴⁴

Yet most notably for our purposes, we do not exercise our dominion in creation by imitation, but by judgment. What makes imitation remedial for us also defines its primary limitation: imitation deals only with particulars. For those who cannot discern wisdom themselves, they see how the wise apply their knowledge of wisdom to particular situations, and thus seek to act likewise. But my ability to discern how to act in particular situations depends upon my having at hand a relevant example. The limitation of imitation is apparent in all those situations with which I am confronted when I cannot recall a relevant example of how a wise person has acted. Or else I'm confronted with examples of wise people who acted differently in the situation before me. When my action is determined by imitation, I confront each situation with knowledge of examples which may or may not be relevant, and may, further, contradict one another. Whereas when I act in accordance with judgment, my action is not modelled on imitation of another human being, but it comes as a response to the order I discern in creation.

Contrasting judgment with necessity, pleasure and imitation has prepared us to return to our central passage in *On True Religion*. We first quote the relevant section: "The mind becomes 'spiritual man, judging all things and judged of none,' (1 Corinthians 2:15) loving the Lord its God with all its heart and all its soul and all its mind, and loving its neighbour not carnally but as itself. He loves himself spiritually who loves God with all that lives within him. On these two commandments hang the whole law and the prophets" (12.24). Judgment is necessary to obey the dual-love command because true obedience comes only with

⁴⁴ Such remedial imitation is clearly a work of the Spirit. In *conf.* 13 imitation of the wise is bound up with love, specifically Christian friendship: "friendship prompts us to emulation" (13.21.31). Such friendship is explicitly stated earlier in *conf.* to be a work of the Spirit (4.4.7). We recall that earlier in *ep.* 11 Augustine described the incarnate Son as providing knowledge and an *example* of how to live and the Spirit as binding us by enjoyment to that knowledge and example. It is by the Spirit's love, then, that the example of Christ is made, as it were, repeat-able in us.

“spiritual” as opposed to “carnal” love. What makes the spiritual man’s love spiritual is *his capacity for judgment*. In terms of my love of God, a true judgment of myself is necessary, in order that I see that I am to love God with all “that lives within me”, namely heart, soul and mind; and so this judgment of myself as primarily a spiritual creature is the basis for my love of neighbour “not carnally but as [myself]” (12.24). Augustine is not straightforwardly here opposing our spiritual nature to our bodily existence. Instead, as we have seen earlier, it is by judgment that we discern the order of creation. As in our consideration of the crying man and happy worm, we only judge well if we can affirm the specific goodness of each thing, even as we value the man more highly than the worm. This logic applies also to the relation of soul and body. Thus, soon after this discussion of the dual-love command he will detail how the body lives by the soul and the soul lives by the Truth, the Son of God (12.25). It is not that obedience to the dual-love command involves denial of our bodily existence; rather, it prioritises our rational soul, which is itself the source of health for our bodies (53.103).

Before considering Augustine’s further discussion of neighbour-love in *On True Religion*, we ought again to pause to consider how in this largely neglected passage we see the first crystallisation of an approach that will become normal for him. The dual-love command will remain an integral feature of Augustine’s ethics and this passage marks an early attempt to work out the relation between love of God and love of neighbour. As John Rist notes, neighbour-love had stood as a “problem” for Augustine because of the ontological priority of God. Christ’s dual-love command challenges Augustine to see, writes Rist, how “ordinary moral life...could itself be constitutive of, rather than merely necessary for, the ‘religious’ life summed up as a return to God.”⁴⁵ In our passage from *True Religion*, we see Augustine bring love of God and love of neighbour together *within* the ascent to God, and he does so with the suggestion that both depend on judgment. In other words, to help him

⁴⁵ Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.149.

resolve this central ethical question he has, *for the first time*, turned to pneumatology and judgment. Specifically, as we will consider further below, by judgment our love of neighbour conforms to its place within God's creation: as Oliver O'Donovan writes, "Love accepts and does not impose its ordering."⁴⁶ From the point of view of Augustine's ethics, too, then, this passage deserves attention in studies of his Trinitarian theology.

Augustine spells out how he understands the relation of neighbour-love and self-love in *On True Religion*. He argues that just as I do not love myself as "father or son or kinsman or anything of the kind, but simply as a [human]" so I also ought to love my neighbour as "his real self." Further, my love of neighbour cannot have as its end some material benefit for me. To love my neighbour thus is to love him "as a beast of burden, or as the baths, or as a gaudy or garrulous bird...in that he does not love the man as a man ought to be loved" (46.87). Commentators often decry the supposed corrupting influence of Platonism present in this approach to neighbour-love which so opposes the temporal and eternal aspects of the neighbour.⁴⁷ Yet that is only a part of the story. Augustine somewhat anticipates this criticism when he acknowledges that some will regard his approach to neighbour-love as "inhuman"; he counters that the real inhumanity would be "not to love that in [your neighbour] which relates to God (*ad Deum pertinet*), but to love that which relates to yourself (*ad se pertinet*)" (46.88). His concern is that our love of our neighbour not be based on what "relates to yourself"; the value that my love acknowledges does not arise merely from whatever relation my neighbour has *to me*.⁴⁸ My capacity to discern myself as a spiritual creature grounds my capacity to see my neighbour as having independent value also as a spiritual creature. This is the central role of judgment suggested in our passage, then, to recognize how the neighbour

⁴⁶ O'Donovan, *Problem*, p. 31.

⁴⁷ As, for example, Nicholas Wolterstorff, in his chapter on Augustine in his *Justice: Rights and Wrongs* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 180-206. We engage with Wolterstorff's reading of Augustine on mercy in chapter three.

⁴⁸ We will see, as has already been indicated above in *conf.* 13, that *ad Deum pertinet* will later be supplanted by *propter Deum*.

relates to God, and to love the reality of my neighbour as a creature of God. Through this recognition my love maintains the ontological priority of God and also acknowledges the integrity of my neighbour.

Approximately five years later, in *On Christian Teaching* 1, Augustine again uses the language of judgment when discussing the dual-love command. He argues that we do not need a commandment to love ourselves or our bodies because it is “an unalterable law of nature” that we do so (26.27); we do need a command to love our neighbour and God. Christ’s commandment reveals how we are to order our loves. In the midst of explicating this, Augustine writes:

But living a just and holy life requires being a good judge of things; to love things, that is to say, in the right order, so that you do not love what is not to be loved, or fail to love what is to be loved, or have a greater love for what should be loved less, or an equal love for things that should be loved less or more, or a lesser or greater love for things that should be loved equally.⁴⁹

We see in this quotation the same concern that was present earlier in *On True Religion* in the relation between judgment and obedience to the dual-love command. Only when we can discern the order of creation by judgment are we capable of ordering our loves. The dual-love command serves to educate our judgment.

That ordered love responds to the value it discovers in creatures determines Augustine’s account of neighbour-love. Following the passage we quoted above from *On Christian Teaching*, Augustine continues: “No sinner is to be loved as a sinner, but each human being should be loved as a human being, for God’s sake; God, though, should be loved for his own sake” (1.27.28). Thus all human beings have value simply in virtue of being creatures; we have a basis, then, for loving all, even the wicked. As Augustine writes in *Against Faustus, a Manichee*: “This is precisely the principle we maintain, that we should

⁴⁹ *doc chri.* 1.27.28 (CCSL 32: 22): “Ille autem iuste et sancte uiuit, qui rerum integer aestimator est; ipse est autem, qui ordinatam habet dilectionem, ne aut diligit, quod non est diligendum, aut non diligit, quod diligendum est, aut amplius diligit, quod minus diligendum est, aut aequè diligit, quod uel minus uel amplius diligendum est, aut minus uel amplius, quod aequè diligendum est.”

hate our enemy for what is evil in him, that is, for wickedness; while we also love our enemy for that which is good in him, that is, for his nature as a social and rational being” (19.24). Alternately, instead of looking for the continued presence of God’s good creation in the wicked, we can look forward to what they may become by God’s grace. Our love, then, as he writes in a letter, responds to the unrealized potential in another: “...we should love those who are bad in order that they might cease to be bad, just as we love the ill not in order that they may remain ill but in order that they may be healed” (*ep.* 153.5.14).⁵⁰ And so in those whom we already do detect virtue, our love appreciates those qualities they possess; yet Augustine specifies that here, too, our love delights in a flourishing that depends on their being ordered by love.⁵¹ Whether another is wicked or virtuous, then, our capacity for judgment orients our love by the value another has in God’s creation. O’Donovan refers to this love as “rational love”, and he captures well the significance of it for Augustine’s ethics:

The objectivity of rational love offers Augustine a way forward to a flexible and coherent statement of the ‘order’ of love. What he needed was an account in which every proper love of creature implied the love of its Creator, while from every improper love this implication was missing... Rational love...could accept as complex an order as it discovered to be present in the universe, since love was at the same time an understanding which comprehended the object’s place in the scheme of things. Love’s order is given by its comprehending conformity to the order of reality.⁵²

We now turn to judgment as evaluation. We have just seen that love responds to the good one sees either actually or potentially present in the neighbour. Judgment as evaluation plays a special role in helping, as it were, with the move from potential to actual. In other words, Augustine believes it is a clear teaching of the New Testament⁵³ that when a fellow Christian has sinned, love demands that we seek to correct him. We see a vivid example of this in *The Trinity* 9. Augustine gives the example of how our action towards another changes when we learn that our initial impressions of him were incorrect. He describes how

⁵⁰ This comparison with how a Doctor loves his patient is present elsewhere (*en. Ps.* 47.4, *Jo. ev. tr.* 65.2).

⁵¹ See *c. Faust.* 22.78 and *Jo. ev. tr.* 32.2.

⁵² O’Donovan, *Problem*, p.31.

⁵³ We will consider the specific verses that form Augustine’s views on this subject in chapter three.

Augustine first desired to meet a man when Augustine had heard that the man was a devout Christian who had suffered for his faith; in this case, then, Augustine's judgment that he was a just man led to him wanting to enjoy the man's friendship. When he meets him, however, he eventually discovers that the man is actually a greedy heretic (a woeful combination!) and so Augustine changes from wanting to enjoy this admirable person's company to attempting to counsel him. The force of the example for Augustine is that our love is oriented by a conception of human nature by which we judge whether we approve or disapprove of some feature of another's character.⁵⁴ When he disapproves, Augustine turns from wanting to enjoy his friendship to pursuing his correction.

We recall that the second area of judgment Augustine specified for the spiritual Christian in *Confessions* 13 is "approving what he finds proper and rebuking anything he finds amiss in the activities and conduct of the faithful" (23.34). Among the list of activities suitable for judgment Augustine includes almsgiving. Later in *Confessions* 13 Augustine offers us an example of such a moral judgment when he refers to Saint Paul's approval of others' almsgiving. We note first that Augustine refers to Paul as one "made new in the knowledge of God, modelled on the image of your creator, a creature truly alive in your heroic continence" (26.40); in Paul, then, we have a spiritual Christian capable of judgment. When he comes to interpret Genesis' description of the "fruitful soil" that feeds human beings on the sixth day, he interprets the fruitfulness of the soil as almsgiving. Paul is the example of one fed by almsgiving, but he is fed in a very particular way.

⁵⁴ Paul Griffiths helpfully explains the significance of this for how Augustine understands error in judgment, which conforms to what we saw earlier in the distinction between judgment and knowledge: "Error in judgment, then, belongs to those acts in which I improperly attribute a property to a particular. Error in this sense cannot belong to rational contemplation. There I can only fail to conform my mind to the changeless, which is not, *strictu sensu*, an error; rather, it is an absence...The making of a judgment about a particular is, in this view, always the application of a universal truth to a particular...Such a judgment is true when the particular of which it is made really does have the property in question; it is false when it does not"; see 'Quasi-Augustinian Account of Error', p. 155. We will look more closely at the nature of misjudgments and return to Griffiths perceptive analysis in the next chapter.

The central point for our purposes is that Augustine repeatedly emphasises how while Paul was desperate for support, his approval of almsgiving did not lie primarily in how the donations met his need. Thus we see that in these evaluative judgments, too, Augustine is concerned that the judge is oriented to the other as having a value independent of himself. What “feeds” Paul in almsgiving, then, is the joy he had in witnessing Christians do good works: “...they who are delighted (*laetantur*) by those [good works] are fed by them” (13.26.39). Such “feeding” cannot occur for those “whose god is their belly” (13.26.39). The capacity for judging another lies in the potential to find joy in another for having done good because of the good itself, and not because of any benefit: “[Paul] rejoices on their account, in that fresh green shoots are appearing, rather than on his own, in having his poverty relieved” (13.26.39). With Paul, then, Augustine gives an example of one who, even when in desperate need, is capable of looking beyond that need to rejoice in new life in creation. Paul’s moral judgment of these Christians, then, is concerned primarily with how their actions indicate their flourishing.

Augustine develops the point still further by specifying exactly what gave Paul such joy: it was not what was given, but the fruit, which is the “good, upright will of the giver (*bona et recta voluntas datoris*)” (13.26.41). By this point in *Confessions 13*, will has become a well-repeated phrase: in the case of both the Holy Spirit as God’s will and the transformation of human wills by the Spirit. In his description of the “good, upright will” Paul focuses on how the goodness of willing lies in its being determined by knowledge. That is, the almsgiving was motivated by the recognition of who Paul is *before God*. Augustine’s discussion of this point involves an interpretation of Jesus’ parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:

Our good Master does not simply say, ‘Anyone who welcomes a prophet,’ he specifies, ‘inasmuch as he is a prophet.’ And he says not simply, ‘Anyone who welcomes a just person,’ but adds, ‘inasmuch as he is a just person.’ Only so will the one receive a prophet’s reward and the other the reward of a just person. Again, he

says not only, ‘Anyone who gives a cup of cold water to one of my little ones,’ but adds, ‘simply because he is a disciple,’ and then goes on to promise, ‘I tell you, he will not miss his reward.’⁵⁵

The action of the giver is only a cause for joy when it follows from a recognition of the receiver’s identity before God. Paul’s joy lies, then, in recognising the Spirit at work in the “good, upright will of the giver.” That will is described as good precisely because its action arises from a knowledge of the one in need in his relation to God: prophet, just person, disciple. In contrast, Augustine specifies that those who are “uninstructed and unbelieving”, may very well perform the very same action as the believer, but they do not actually ‘feed’ their neighbour because they act without knowledge of the true character and end of the action (*cum id quare faciendum sit et quo pertineat ignorent*) (13.27.42). In his judgment, then, Paul takes joy in his recognition of the work of the Spirit in his fellow Christian.

We can now bring our first section on pneumatology and judgment together with our second on judgment and ethics. In the first section, we demonstrated that as the Spirit orders us, we are made capable of judgment; in the second section, we demonstrated that this capacity for judgment is a key means by which we order our loves and participate in the Spirit’s perfecting work by correcting others or approving their works. A central conclusion of our explorations thus far, then, is that the Holy Spirit’s activity is essential to make us ethical agents.

III. ‘And God saw that it was good’

We have already seen, in *Confessions* 13, how spiritual Christians’ capacity for judgment depends on the discernment of what is “good and pleasing and perfect” to God. We will explore this role of the Spirit further by surveying Augustine’s interpretations of God’s

⁵⁵ *conf.* 13.26.41 (CCSL 27: 267): “Non enim ait magister bonus: *Qui suscepit prophetam* tantum, sed addidit: *in nomine prophetae*; neque ait tantum: *Qui suscepit iustum*, sed addidit: *in nomine iusti*; ita quippe ille mercedem prophetae, iste mercedem iusti accipiet. Nec solum ait: *Qui calicem aquae frigidae potum dedit uni ex minimis meis*, sed addidit: *tantum in nomine discipuli*, et sic adiunxit: *amen dico uobis, non perdet mercedem suam*.”

repeated declaration in Genesis that what God made was “good”, beginning with *On Genesis, against the Manichees* (388/389) and concluding with *City 11* (ca. 417).⁵⁶ All Augustine’s mature interpretations of God’s declaration are pneumatological and demonstrate how, objectively the Spirit is at work in creation to make all things good, and, subjectively, the Spirit enables us to *perceive* that goodness; this perception is the basis of true judgments, which orient right action.⁵⁷

In *On Genesis, against the Manichees*, his first commentary on Genesis, Augustine interprets God’s declaration of light’s “goodness” without reference to the Spirit. The main challenge he sees in Genesis 1:4 (“And God saw the light that it was good”) is how to counter the Manicheans’ suggestion that this verse denies God’s omniscience; the Manicheans contend that it seems God either did not know what light was or did not know that light was good until after God had made it. Augustine relies upon an analogy to deal with his devious opponents. Even with human acts of creation, he argues, we can distinguish between the craftsman’s knowledge of his craft and the satisfaction he finds when he has completed a new work; we would not say, then, that the craftsman was ignorant of what a chair was or how to make one until after he completed it. Nonetheless, we would not regard it as out of place for him to be pleased when it was finished: “So then, because he is pleased with what he has made, does that mean that before he made it he did not know what good work was?” (1.8.13). While this response certainly packs a considerable rhetorical punch, Augustine’s attempted answer compromises God’s omniscience, because the pleasure God takes in completing his

⁵⁶ For a helpful overview of Augustine’s Genesis commentaries see Sabine MacCormack, “Augustine Reads Genesis,” *Augustinian Studies* 39.1 (2008): 5-47. *Conf.* 13 and *civ. Dei* 11 are not stand alone commentaries as such, but I include them in this section because they do provide Scriptural exegesis of God’s declaration that what he made is good.

⁵⁷ Gerber is wise to be hesitant in identifying the Spirit with goodness in four early texts of 388-9 (*DDQ* 26, 6, *Mor.* 2.7.9, *VR* 39.72). Augustine himself is hesitant, especially, perhaps, over the attribution of goodness to one of the three persons as a special attribute. When, later, he makes goodness a normal designation of the Spirit, he is careful to avoid denying it to the Father and the Son; see the discussion below of *City* 11.

work seems to attribute temporality to God's knowledge of creation. Augustine himself will raise this very problem later, in *Confessions* 13.

Augustine indicates dissatisfaction with this answer within *Genesis* itself as he moves quickly from reasoned argument to sharp polemic. He seems to concede that Genesis' description of God's pleasure in the light he made presents a serious problem that his analogy cannot adequately resolve, but the Manicheans ought to take note that they cannot doge some problems themselves. In particular, Augustine refers to the Gospels' descriptions of Jesus' exclamations of wonder at the faith of some of those he encounters as comparable to Genesis' description of God's pleasure at what he made. The Manicheans believe either that Jesus is the cause of the faith he encountered in others, or that he would have foreknowledge of their faith; in either case, Jesus' wonder presents a problem: "If the Manichees can solve that problem, then they should note that the other one can be solved on the same lines. But if they can't solve it, what right have they to find fault with these texts which they won't allow are any concern of theirs, when they do not know the meaning of ones which they say do concern them?" In other words, Augustine seems to admit that, yes, it is a problem, but it is a problem for both of us (1.8.14).

In his two next commentaries we see two different, if complementary, approaches to resolving this exegetical challenge, both of which turn on the Spirit. In his *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis* (hereafter *Literal Interpretation*), in which Augustine reads the days of creation as literally describing how God made all things at the beginning of time, Augustine interprets God's declaration that creation is good as a reference to the Spirit's work, specifically to the Spirit's perfecting work, thus making creation worthy of God's approval. When commenting on the first such declaration of creation's goodness in Genesis 1:3, the creation of light, Augustine writes:

Now what the Son speaks the Father speaks, because when the Father speaks, a Word is uttered which is the Son, with God uttering in an eternal manner, if 'manner' it can

be called, a co-eternal Word. For in God there is a supreme and holy and just courtesy and a kind of love in his activity which comes not from any need on his part but from his generosity. That is why, before Scripture came to the text, ‘God said, ‘Let light be made’ (Gn 1:3), it preceded it by saying, ‘And the Spirit of God was suspended over the water’ (Gn 1:2)...the Spirit of God was suspended over [the water], because any formless material that was still in need of form and perfection ‘lay under’--under the good will of the Creator, that is. This means that when God said in his Word, ‘Let light be made,’ and so on, what was made would abide in his good will, that is, would meet with his approval according to the measure of its kind. And so it is right that is pleased God, as Scripture says, ‘And light was made; and God saw the light that it was good’ (Genesis 1:3-4).⁵⁸

This passage describes how Augustine discerns the work of all three persons twice in the first four verses of Genesis 1. First, we have the Father (“God created”) who creates all things through the Son (“beginning”), which are subject to the Spirit (“Spirit borne over the waters”). This same Triune logic is present again in Genesis when the Father speaks (“God said”) light into existence in the Son (“Let light be made”) and then perfects it by the Spirit (“God saw the light that it was good”). God’s declaration that the light is good, then, refers not to God’s sudden perception of light’s goodness, but instead the declaration that light is good refers to *the Spirit making it good*. Specifically the Spirit makes created things pleasing to God by conforming them to their nature, given in the Son.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ *Gn. litt* 1.5.11 (PL 34): “Pater loquitur, quia Patre loquente dicitur Verbum, quod Filius est, aeterno more, si more dicendum est, loquente Deo Verbum coaeternum. Inest enim Deo benignitas summa, et sancta et iusta; et quidem non ex indigentia, sed ex beneficentia veniens amor in opera sua. Propterea priusquam scriberetur: *Dixit Deus: Fiat lux* [18](#); praecessit Scriptura dicens: *Et Spiritus Dei superferebatur super aquam*...superferebatur utique Spiritus Dei; quia subiacebat scilicet bonae voluntati Creatoris, quidquid illud erat quod formandum perficiendumque inchoaverat: ut dicente Deo in Verbo suo: *Fiat lux*; in bona voluntate, hoc est in beneplacito eius pro modulo sui generis maneret quod factum est; et ideo rectum est, quod placuerit Deo, Scriptura dicente: *Et facta est lux; et vidit Deus lucem quia bona est*.”

⁵⁹ Robert Crouse argues that there is a relation between the comprehensive affirmation of creation’s goodness that is central to Augustine’s doctrine of creation and his Trinitarianism. Crouse develops this point in contrast to pagan Platonism: “Certainly, for pagan Platonism, as Augustine clearly recognises, creation is creation in the Word. But while for them the Word (or ‘Nous’) must be somehow a subordinate, derivative principle of distinction, outside the absolute unity of the purely actual, transcendent One (in a manner analogous to that of some forms of Arian Christology), for Augustine the Word is absolutely God. That is to say, the Word, as the principle of intelligible distinction in which all things are created, and the Spirit, as governing their distribution or relatedness, are hypostases belonging equally and eternally to the essential unity of the divine Trinity. There is, quite literally, and in the most radical sense, nothing outside the unity of the triune activity: no irrational element, no ‘errant cause,’ no quasi-independent matter; and, therefore, creation can in no way be seen in terms of successive diminutions of divinity, but only in terms of the efficient causality of the divine will. As Augustine puts it, with sublime simplicity, the only reason of creation is that a good God makes good things.” R.D. Crouse, ‘Augustinian Platonism in Early Medieval Theology’, in *Augustine: From Rhetor to Theologian*, ed. by Joanne McWilliam (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1992), pp. 109-120 (p.112).

Augustine's description of the Spirit in this passage as God's good will is especially significant for us. We saw the language of will earlier, in *Confessions* 13, and there too it was associated with the Spirit; in *Literal Interpretation*, the Son is described as the Father's eternal Word. What the Father knows and speaks eternally in the Son is perfected temporally by the Spirit. Especially significant is that the Spirit's perfecting work is God's pleasure in or approval of (*beneplacito*) what God has made. There are two sides to this: first, all things that exist only continue by the Spirit, and, therefore, their continued existence itself is a kind of affirmation of them as God would not let them continue otherwise; second, all things are subjected to God's will by the Spirit and so they inevitably participate in achieving the good God intends for them. Within the Triune life, then, we may say that the Spirit exercises God's judgment in creation.

While in the *Literal Interpretation*, the Spirit's role was to confer the seal of goodness on created things, in *Confessions* it is to enable us to appreciate their goodness. This difference corresponds to the difference in focus in the two works: the one concerned with the creation ('literally'), while the other is concerned with humankind's redemption and elevation to the eternity of God. And so, in *Confessions* 13, God's declaration that what he has made is "good" is the Spirit's appreciation *in us* of that goodness. This resolves the final exegetical challenge of *Confessions* that Augustine had raised, and, as we have seen, to which he has been responding since *On Genesis, against the Manichees*: how God's omniscience can be squared with God's repeated discovery of creation's goodness. Augustine attributes the resolution to this challenge to God's inspiration, and so he articulates it as though God were speaking it to him:

Listen, human creature: what my scripture says, I myself say, but whereas scripture says it in terms of time, my Word is untouched by time, because he subsists with me eternally, equal to myself. What you see through my Spirit, I see, just as what you say through my Spirit, I say. You see these things in terms of time, but I do not see in

time, nor when you say these things in temporal fashion do I speak in a way conditioned by time.⁶⁰

It seems, given the references to Word and Spirit, that the Father is speaking. And so we see Augustine resolve this exegetical challenge by the hermeneutical principle that he mentioned when he first introduced the Spirit over the waters in *Confessions* 13, that Scripture frequently attributes to God what God does in us by the Spirit (13.4.5). The temporal perception of creation's goodness is not God's, then, but ours by the Spirit's inspiration.

The pneumatological perception of creation's goodness is contrasted with two other perceptions of it. These two perceptions recall what we saw in a later text, *City* 11, in which Augustine contrasted judgment's recognition of a created thing's value according to the order of creation with a value based entirely on need or want. The first position Augustine discusses in *Confessions* 13 is that of the Manicheans, who believe that God was "driven by necessity" to create as part of a cosmic battle (30.45); several paragraphs later, Augustine also restates this position as involving "think[ing] a good thing evil" (31.46). The latter phrasing puts the matter far more starkly than the former, yet both are clear rejections of creation's goodness: the opposition between good and evil is self-evident, but that between good and necessity is perhaps less so. Augustine states repeatedly throughout *Confessions* 13 that God created because God "did not want so good a thing to be missing" (2.2). The goodness of creation, then, is not tied to necessity, but to the gratuity of God's goodness. To regard creation entirely in terms of necessity is a rejection of its goodness comparable to regarding it as evil.⁶¹

⁶⁰ *conf.* 13.29.44 (CCSL 27: 268): "O homo, nempe quod scriptura mea dicit, ego dico, et tamen illa temporaliter dicit, uerbo autem meo tempus non accidit, quia aequali mecum aeternitate consistit. Sic ea, quae uos per spiritum meum uidetis ego, uideo, sicut ea, quae uos per spiritum meum dicitis, ego dico. Atque ita cum uos temporaliter ea uideatis, non ego temporaliter uideo, quemadmodum, cum uos temporaliter ea dicatis, non ego temporaliter dico."

⁶¹ See Williams' excellent article on Augustine's doctrine of creation: "'Good for Nothing'?: Augustine on Creation", *Augustinian Studies* 25 (1994) 9-24. He further develops the contemporary theological relevance of *creatio ex nihilo* in his "On Being Creatures" in *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 63-78.

The second position belongs to those who “see that [creation] is good, as many do who find your good creation pleasant, but fail to find you within it, and look for their enjoyment in creation itself rather than in you” (31.46).⁶² These two positions are essentially opposites: the first denies creation’s goodness, the second affirms it. Yet the affirmation of creation’s goodness is separated from one’s relation to God. We have here, perhaps, a criticism of NeoPlatonism which affirms the One as the origin of all things, but the One’s transcendence severs any connection between creation’s goodness and the One as cause. The multiplicity in creation is removed from the unity of the One. The result, however, is that they “look for their enjoyment in creation itself”; they may look, he hints, but will not find any enjoyment worthy of the name. To enjoy creation rightly is to enjoy God *in* creation.

Just as judgment was contrasted with need and pleasure in *City* 11, Augustine contrasts the pneumatological perception of creation with that of the Manicheans and the NeoPlatonists:

It is different for people who see creation through your Spirit, for you are seeing it through their eyes. Thus when such people see that these things are good, you are seeing that they are good; whatever created things please them for your sake, it is you who are pleasing them in these things; and anything that pleases us through your Spirit, pleases you in us...If, then, seeing something in God’s Spirit, they perceive it to be good, it is evidently not they, but God, who sees that it is good.⁶³

By the Spirit’s activity what we find good in creation conforms to what God finds good; yet unlike God, whose knowledge of creation’s goodness is eternally within the Son, our temporal knowledge participates in that eternal knowledge by the Spirit uniting us to the Son. The result is that, unlike the Manicheans who find nothing to please them, and the NeoPlatonists, who find much to please them, but apart from God, the Christian’s pleasure in creation, by the Spirit, is pleasure *in God* which is simultaneously God’s pleasure *in us*.

⁶² *conf.* 13.31. 46 (CCSL 27: 269): “sicut multis tua creatura placet, quia bona est, quibus tamen non tu places in ea, unde frui magis ipsa quam te uolunt...”

⁶³ *Ibid.*: “Qui autem per spiritum tuum uident ea, tu uides in eis. Ergo cum uident, quia bona sunt, tu uides, quia bona sunt, et quaecumque propter te placent, tu in eis places, et quae per spiritum tuum placent nobis, tibi placent in nobis.... ita quidquid in spiritu dei uident quia bonum est, non ipsi, sed deus uidet, quia bonum est.”

The difference between a NeoPlatonic affirmation of creation's goodness and a pneumatological one is not simply, as it were, a bit of pious Christianity attached to whatever pleases us. Augustine also implicitly suggests that the pneumatological perception of creation's goodness is distinctive in its *comprehensiveness*:

Different from both is the attitude of one who sees it as good in such a way that their God views its goodness through that person's human eyes. This means that God is loved in what he has made. But he could not be loved were it not through the Spirit he has given us, 'because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit bestowed upon us.' Through him we see that everything is good which in any degree has being, because it derives from him who has being in no degree at all, but is simply, 'He is'.⁶⁴

Augustine's quotation of Romans 5:5 in this passage is especially relevant for us. As we saw above, Augustine is concerned with how we are subjectively transformed to become attuned to God's work objectively in creation. In this passage, it is by the Spirit pouring the love of God into our hearts that we are able to love God in what God has made. Our approval and pleasure in creation conforms to God's. The logic of this passage is essentially the same as that of the later text, *The Trinity* 9, which we treated above: the Spirit orders our love so that our perception of creation is as *God's* creation; the value to which our love responds is a value derived from a thing as a creature. Thus in *Confessions* 13 whereas the Manicheans deludedly see only necessity and evil, and the NeoPlatonists affirm creation as good separate from God, the Christian sees God's goodness present everywhere, from "the happy worm" to "the sad man."

Our perception of creation's goodness is the work of the Spirit, then, for two primary reasons. First, because by the Spirit we are united to Wisdom, and so are able to discern the specific nature--and goodness--of each thing within the coherent whole of creation. Second, by the Spirit's gift of love, we ourselves are recipients of God's gratuitous goodness. By the

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*: "...aliud autem, ut, cum aliquid uidet homo quia bonum est, deus in illo uideat, quia bonum est, ut scilicet ille ametur in eo, quod fecit, qui non amaretur nisi per spiritum, quem dedit, quoniam caritas dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum, qui datus est nobis, per quem uidemus, quia bonum est, quidquid aliquo modo est: ab illo enim est, qui non aliquo modo est, sed est est."

Spirit, we are, as it were, taken inside the project of creation and so are able to discern the same goodness at work outside us that is at work within us. That is a goodness which is not determined at all by need but by the freedom of God. By the Spirit's work, then, the ground of our judgments becomes that goodness.

In Augustine's latest commentary on the opening chapter of Genesis, in *City* 11, we see again this relation between pneumatology and goodness. Whereas *Literal Interpretation* focused on the Spirit's objective work in making things good, and *Confessions* 13 focused on the Spirit's subjective work making us perceive goodness, these two sides come together subtly in *City* 11.

We begin first with the Spirit's objective work in creation as "good." Augustine's justification for seeing the Spirit in the declaration that creation is "good" follows his understanding of the third person's Scriptural title of "Holy Spirit." Whereas in the *Literal Commentary*, Augustine's identification of the Spirit with God's approval of creation relied on the Spirit's work in creation, in *City* he more boldly argues that the Spirit is "good" because of its distinct personhood in the Triune life. In an observation he also makes in *The Trinity* 15, Augustine notes that the Spirit's title of "Holy Spirit" includes two terms that can both also be used of Father and Son. This title discloses, to those with eyes to see, the Spirit's nature as "the holiness of both, not as if He were merely a divine attribute, but as a substantial person of the Trinity in himself." This same logic can be applied to goodness. Earlier in *City* 11, when contrasting God's simplicity with the nature of all created things, Augustine had described God as "a Good which alone is simple", and, because of that simplicity, each person of the Trinity is fully "Good" (11.10). As with "holy" and "spirit", then, so too with "goodness": the Spirit's title as "goodness" does not belong to the Spirit alone, or, more precisely, the Spirit may be uniquely deserving of the title goodness because of its nature as

the goodness that is shared between the Father and Son; and like holiness, that goodness too is not simply “a divine attribute”, but “a substantial person.”⁶⁵

Earlier in *City* 11, before he turns explicitly to pneumatology, Augustine had written of God’s declaration as “an approbation of a work made according to that plan which is the wisdom of God.” The Spirit, then, is that divine approval at work realising God’s loving purposes for creation known in the Word. We see this with Augustine’s conclusion to this section of his argument with Trinitarian answers to his three questions:

Who made it? By what means did He make it? and, Why did He make it? For it is the Father of the Word Who said, Let it be. And that which was made when He spoke was beyond doubt made by means of the Word. Again, when it is said, ‘God saw that it was good’, it is thereby sufficiently signified that God made what He made not from any necessity, not because He had need of any benefit, but simply from His own goodness: that is, so that it might be good. And this was said after the created thing had been made, so that there might be no doubt that its existence was in harmony with the goodness for the sake of which it was made. And if this goodness is rightly understood to be the Holy Spirit, then the whole Trinity is revealed to us in the works of God.⁶⁶

The Spirit is that goodness, then, as the agency of God at work so that what God makes “might be good”.

Further, the three questions Augustine uses here ought to sound eerily familiar; recall the three questions in *Letter* 11 and *Question* 18: “Does a thing exist at all? Is it this particular thing or something else? Should it be approved or disapproved?” In *City* 11, these questions have been altered and are further developed, yet their essential logic is still present: the Father as granting all things existence, the Son as giving them their nature, and the Spirit as

⁶⁵ *civ. Dei* 11.24 (CCSL 48: 343): “Vtrum autem boni Patris et boni Filii Spiritus sanctus, quia communis ambobus est, recte bonitas dici possit amborum, non audeo temerariam praecipitare sententiam; uerum tamen amborum eum dicere sanctitatem facilius ausus fuero, non amborum quasi qualitatem, sed ipsum quoque substantiam et tertiam in trinitate personam. Ad hoc enim me probabilius ducit, quod, cum sit et Pater spiritus et Filius spiritus, et Pater sanctus et Filius sanctus, proprie tamen ipse uocatur Spiritus sanctus tamquam sanctitas substantialis et consubstantialis amborum.”

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*: “[Q]uis fecerit, per quid fecerit, propter quid fecerit. Pater quippe intellegitur Verbi, qui dixit ut fiat; quod autem illo dicente factum est, procul dubio per Verbum factum est; in eo uero quod dicitur: *Vidit Deus, quia bonum est*, satis significatur Deum nulla necessitate, nulla suae cuiusquam utilitatis indigentia, sed sola bonitate fecisse quod factum est, id est, quia bonum est; quod ideo postea quam factum est dicitur, ut res, quae facta est, congruere bonitati, propter quam facta est, indicetur. Quae bonitas si Spiritus Sanctus recte intellegitur, uniuersa nobis trinitas in suis operibus intimatur.”

maintaining them and perfecting them in that nature. For our purposes, what is most essential is that the Spirit, as goodness, is the grounds for God's approval of creation. Goodness is the purpose of the creation of all things and it is the end towards which they all move.

We now come to the more subtle argument of *City* 11, which is implicit in the structure of the chapters leading up to this passage on the Spirit as "goodness." The Spirit's role in creation is not considered until late in the discussion. Why, we must ask, is this so? We encounter in the four chapters leading up to the central pneumatological passage arguments which we have now grown familiar. We will rehearse them in brief to demonstrate their structure.

In chapter 21, Augustine writes that in each declaration of a created thing's goodness we see the Father making "an approbation of a work made according to that plan which is the Wisdom of God (*operis approbatio secundum artem facti, quae Sapientia Dei est*)" (11.21). With the language of "approval (*approbatio*)", we have God's judgement upon what he has made; further, we see the basis for that judgment in the reference to the Son, who is the plan of creation, and the eternal Wisdom of God. Here we have Father and Son but, notably, the Spirit is absent (or, at least, at this point, explicitly absent).

In chapter 22, the Manichees are criticized on two fronts. First, they are incapable of perceiving creation's goodness, for they look only for utility, and so cannot see "how splendid such things are in their own places and natures, and which what beautiful order they are disposed, and how much they contribute in proportion to their own share of beauty, to the universe as a whole, as to a commonwealth" (11.22). We recall that the "free exercise of judgment" involves seeing "what value a thing has in itself, as part of the order of nature" (11.16); in this passage Augustine writes the Manicheans are not capable of considering things "in their own places and natures." He does not refuse the utility of created things. But even on this front, the Manicheans are too quick to judge: often what they regard as evil is

useful when used properly (such as poison). Second, the Manicheans ought to also look beyond their own needs and consider that even what seems useless may belong in some way to God's good creation: "Such little things are, after all, to be measured not by their own magnitude, for they have none, but by the Wisdom of the Creator who made them." He continues that when we do so, we are concerned not only with what is useful to us, but also with what is *beautiful*. When we perceive creation according to God's Wisdom, we look not only for utility, but also for the beautiful arrangement of all things in their difference and relation. Instead, the Manicheans see God make all things out of the "extreme necessity of repulsing the evil force that rebelled against Him" (11.22).

The majority of chapter 23 is taken up with a critique of Origen and his followers, who are also guilty of perceiving creation in terms of necessity, specifically as a punishment for human sin. Certainly Augustine himself sees God's just punishment for human sin present in creation, but it is not the *cause* of creation.

At the conclusion of chapter 23, Augustine returns to God's declaration of creation's goodness and suggests that we may have, in fact, "a profound and mystic intimation of the Trinity." In the preceding sentence he summarizes his earlier interpretation thus: "God made it, by means of the Word, and so that it might be good" (11.23). Augustine is expanding his interpretation of the declaration to include the Spirit as somehow present in the approval of creation as God.

In chapter 24, as we have just seen, Augustine argues that the Spirit is "goodness." Why, then, is Augustine only introducing the Spirit's place in that declaration *now*? He saves his mention of the Spirit until he has confronted the Manicheans and Origenists, because their failure to recognize creation's goodness demonstrates the necessity of the Spirit's activity in us. Our perception of creation's goodness depends on the Spirit. Thus we see that in *City* Augustine has brought together the objective work of the Spirit in creation, as discussed

explicitly in the text, with its subjective role in enabling us to discern the goodness of creation, indicated by the structure of the argument.

In this introductory chapter, we have established the essential relations between pneumatology, judgment and ethics. We saw in our first section on pneumatology and judgment that as we are ordered subjectively by the Spirit, so we can discern that order objectively in creation; this discernment is the basis for true judgments. In our second section on judgment and ethics, we explored how our capacity for judgment is the means by which we order our loves; by judgment, our love (and action) can respond to the reality of God's creation. Further, when judgment serves correction or approval, we play a small part in caring for God's creation, and so participate in the Spirit's work. Finally, in our third section, we argued that the Spirit's role in judgment is grounded in how the Spirit enables us to perceive the goodness of creation. Apart from such a perception, our judgments err. In general, then, we can say that the Spirit's significance in judgment and ethics lies in its disclosure to us of God's purposes for creation, known eternally in the Son, and perfected by the Spirit. In our second chapter, we will take up an idea that we encountered repeatedly in this chapter that demands further study: the Spirit develops our capacity for judgment by pouring the love of God in our hearts. But how is it that the gift of love develops our judgment? To this question we will now turn.

Chapter 2

The Theory of Judgment II: Love, Lust and Judgment

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the Father is not in those who love the world; for all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life--comes not from the Father but from the world.”

-- 1 John 2:15-16

In this second “theoretical” chapter, we will use Augustine’s repeated references to 1 John 2:16 to explore how lust deforms our judgment, and then we will follow the opposite process, examining how our judgment is restored by the Spirit’s gift of love. Throughout this chapter, judgment denotes discernment of a thing’s nature. Much scholarly debate has focused on possible influences on Augustine’s use of the triad that comprises love of the world: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life. Augustine’s Christian Latin predecessors hardly commented upon this verse,⁶⁷ and so some scholars have searched for potential non-Christian antecedents. Major figures of Platonism have all been suggested: Plato, by Du Roy;⁶⁸ Porphyry, by Theiler;⁶⁹ and Plotinus, by O’Connell.⁷⁰ Despite much speculation on and re-construction of possible triads elsewhere, no exact parallel has been found that can be conclusively demonstrated to resemble Augustine’s triad. O’Donnell puts the matter well: “In the absence of clear parallels and in the absence of a formed Christian tradition, we must leave room for Augustine’s own powers of imaginative response to an

⁶⁷ According to Dideberg’s count, the triad appears only once in Ambrose, Ambrosiaster and Tertullian, twice in Jerome, and six times in Cyprian; see D. Dideberg, *Saint Augustin et la première épître de saint Jean* (Paris: Editions Beauchesne, 1975), p. 185. J. F. Procope does note that the Greek Fathers often spoke of the misuse of the soul’s three powers, though there is no clear line from them to Augustine; see ‘Augustine, Plotinus and Saint John’s Three Concupiscences’, *Studia Patristica* 17.3 (1982), 1300-1305 (p.1302 n18).

⁶⁸ Du Roy specifically sees the influence of Plato’s doctrine of the tripartite soul, pp. 343-363.

⁶⁹ Willy Theiler, *Porphyrios und Augustin* (Halle, 1933), pp.36ff.

⁷⁰ O’Connell, *Saint Augustine’s Early Theory of Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 174-182.

evocative text.”⁷¹ Our focus will not be on this more speculative question of influence. We will look primarily at three texts in which Augustine explicates how, through lust, we abandon our middle position in creation: below God, next to our fellow human beings, and above nature.⁷² In terms of our capacity for judgment, in our middle place we are subjected to God in love and, therefore, we judge by the Son who is Truth and the Wisdom in whom all things are created; when we abandon our place due to lust, we are left to construct some other basis for judgments, most often with ourselves at the centre of the world. Throughout the texts that we will consider, we will see the alternative between the Spirit’s gift of the love of God, by which we can judge creation rightly, and the love of the world, by which we misperceive creation as vain.

I. Overview of 1 John 2:16

In the majority of citations of 1 John 2:16, Augustine uses the triad as a brief, comprehensive classification of human sin.⁷³ He does so from the first time he explicitly quotes 1 John 2:16 in *On Music*, after he quotes the dual-love command. Our love is directed, by the latter, to God and neighbour, and, by the former, away from the world (6.14.43); thus 1 John 2:16 plays the inverse role of the dual-love command; it is a summation of disordered love. Further, not only does the verse say what we are not to love, but in Augustine’s reading it also provides a comprehensive classification of sin in the triad of lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and pride of life. In subsequent quotations of the verse the pairing of this triad with the two-fold love command fades from use, whereas the use of the triad for a comprehensive classification of sin remains; the significance of its comprehensive

⁷¹ O’Donnell, *Confessions: Commentary on Books 8 to 13*, p. 205.

⁷² We will generally be focusing on Augustine’s understanding of the term lust prior to its transformation during the Pelagian controversy. John Rist helpfully distinguishes these: “In Augustine’s mature writings *concupiscence* is not so much the active attitude, the lust of a man which constitutes his sin, but a defect in which is the effect of sin, the permanent weakness which we have inherited from Adam”; see *Ancient Thought Baptized*, p. 136.

⁷³ We are focusing on Augustine’s account of sin as love of the world; he has other approaches to sin such as, to take one notable example, the Satanic sin of *complacentia sui* as opposed to *complacentia Dei*.

classification is that it beautifully elucidates precisely what disordered love consists in. The triad encompasses all the ways Satan can tempt and enslave human beings,⁷⁴ and all that God graciously liberates us from.⁷⁵ When Augustine discerns a triad in Scripture that relates to sin, he discovers our triad, as with the animals listed on the sixth day of creation,⁷⁶ the punishment of the serpent,⁷⁷ the temptations of Christ⁷⁸ and the excuses for missing the great banquet.⁷⁹ Some of the variety in which the order of the triad is presented, then, is explained by the demands of his exegesis. The order of the three in the biblical text often determines the order in which he explicates the triad.⁸⁰ This brief classificatory application of disordered love recurs throughout Augustine's corpus, extending to his very last works.⁸¹

Early in his use of our triad, Augustine is concerned to determine which sins belong to each category. He resolves this question quite quickly;⁸² after the first time that he quotes the triad in *On Music* (6.14.44), he restates the triad thus: as the love of (1) carnal pleasure (*voluptate carnali*); (2) honours and praises of men (*honoribus et laudibus hominum*); (3) exploring things touching the body from without (*exploratione quae forinsecus corpus attingunt*) (6.14.48). In another text that Augustine began composing at approximately the

⁷⁴ For examples, see *vera rel.* 3.4, 55.107; *Gn. adv. Man.* 1.17.26-2.18.27, 2.26.4; *en. Ps.* 8.13, *ss.* 112.2-6, 219, *agon.* 1.1.

⁷⁵ See *Gn. adv. Man.* 1.23.40, *s.* 311.6-7, *pat.* 17.14, *ep. Jo.* 2.14, *conf.* 13.21.30.

⁷⁶ See *conf.* 13.21.30, *Gn. adv. Man.* 1.23.40; and other animals are interpreted according to the triad, too; see *en. Ps.* 8.13.

⁷⁷ Augustine argues that the serpent's punishment that he will crawl on his (1) chest and (2) belly and (3) eat earth corresponds to (1) pride, (2) carnal desire, (3) curiosity. This interpretation, to my knowledge, only appears in *Gn. adv. Man.* (2.17.26-2.18.27). Perhaps Augustine eventually concluded (correctly!) it was a bit of a stretch.

⁷⁸ *s.* 284.5, *ep. Jo.* 2.14, *vera rel.* 38.71.

⁷⁹ *s.* 112.2-6. According to Richard Newhauser, Augustine's interpretation of this parable "formed the basis for an unbroken line of homiletic comment running up to at least Bonaventure"; see 'Augustinian *Vitium Curiositatis* and its reception', in *St Augustine and his Influence in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Edward B. King and Jacqueline T. Schaefer (Sewanee: The Press of the University of the South, 1988) pp. 99-124 (p.115).

⁸⁰ As, for example, with his interpretation of the great banquet *s.* 112.2-6, and with the temptations of Christ; see references in notes 78 and 79 above.

⁸¹ The verse was frequently quoted in Augustine's debates with Julian regarding the nature of concupiscence (see *c. Jul.* 4.13.64, 6.2.3 [421], *c. Jul. imp.* 3.170, 4.18 [429-430]). Even prior to those debates, in which the triad would inevitably come to the fore because of the subject at issue, the triad remains present (*s.* 284.5 [418], *gr. et pecc. or.* 1.20.21 [418]).

⁸² It is difficult to be more precise, because there is no consensus as to exactly when Augustine finished certain of these early works in which the triad is present.

same time, *Ways of Life*, the triad appears as well, if in a rather haphazard way (1.20.37-1.21.38). There is some debate whether the triad is present at all;⁸³ even among those who affirm that the triad *is* present, there is disagreement over what the three parts of the triad might be.⁸⁴ In my reading, the classes of sin are (1) *illecebrae...corporis* (2) *curiosi* (3) *superbia*.⁸⁵ Whereas in *On Music*, love of others' praise seems to correspond to pride of life, in *Ways of Life*, it seems that Augustine understands that sin to belong to '*illecebrae...corporis*'. This is evident in that the New Testament's condemnation of love of one's reputation belongs to the more general instruction to not love the world: "*Gloria uero popularis sic in nouo testamento abicitur atque contemnitur.*" Whereas when Augustine discusses curiosity, he suggests that he is moving into a discussion of another class of sin: "*Est item aliud quod de corporibus per imaginationes quasdam concipit anima, et eam uocat rerum scientiam.*" Similarly, when he comes to what I take to be the third item in the triad as listed in *Ways of Life*, pride, he describes it as resulting from curiosity: "This begets so much pride, that they look upon themselves as inhabitants of the heaven of which they often discourse (*Unde tanta etiam superbia gignitur, ut in ipso caelo, de quo saepe disputant, sibimet habitare videantur*)" (21.38).⁸⁶ Yet this reading is tentative, because while Augustine clearly has 1 John 2:16 in mind, he comments on four sins: (1) bodily delights; (2) love of reputation; (3) curiosity; and (4) pride. Love of reputation seems to belong to bodily delights, and pride, in this case, is caused by curiosity. That scholars do not agree about what three sins make up the triad is, in this case, because Augustine himself has yet to condense his account of the triad into the snappy list that it will shortly become. As one scholar puts it, at

⁸³ O'Connell, p. 175 n22.

⁸⁴ Whether '[1] *illecebrae autem corporis* [2] *gloria uero popularis* [3] *curiosi*' (as in O'Donnell, *Commentary* III, p. 205) or [1] *curiosi* [2] *superbia* [3] *cupiditas*; see also Kevin Coyle, *Augustine's De moribus ecclesiae catholicae: a study of the work, its composition and its sources* (Fribourg: University Press, 1978), p. 361.

⁸⁵ According to Procope, Augustine is the first person to identify lust of the eyes as curiosity (p. 1301).

⁸⁶ The contention that *cupiditas* is the third in the triad in *mor.* (see n17) strikes me as forced. The *cupiditas* in question is mentioned as *uanae cognitionis cupiditate*, thus it refers not to a distinct class of sin, but seems instead to be a further clarification of the nature of curiosity.

this point his use of the triad is “disorganized and undigested.”⁸⁷ Very soon, though, the sins of the triad become standardized. In *On Genesis, against the Manichees*, finished one year later than *On Music* and *Ways of Life*, the standard form appears, in which lust of flesh, lust of eyes, and pride of life correspond to carnal desire, curiosity and pride respectively: *carnali concupiscentiae, curiositate, superbia* (1.23.40; see also 2.17.26-2.18.27; 2.26.40). The order in which the classes of sins are explicated varies, as we will see further below, but the general understanding of which sins belong to each class remains consistent throughout subsequent instances in which the triad is considered in some depth.

We can also see, from early on, that Augustine wants to determine the consequences of each category of sin, specifically the relation between types of lust and particular misperceptions of creation. This use of our triad is especially relevant for us because later, in *Confessions* 10 and *The Trinity* 12, Augustine will detail how the sins of our triad contribute to the erosion of our capacity for judgment. Early on, in *Ways of Life* and *On Genesis, against the Manichees*, Augustine attempts to match each sin with a delusion, notably the heretical beliefs of the Manicheans. In *Ways of Life* Augustine considers our triad when discussing the virtue of temperance, which he defines as “a kind of integrity (*integritatem*) and incorruption (*incorruptionem*) in the love by which we are united to (*innectimur*) God” (1.19.35). To be temperate, we must love God *alone*, while “all this world, that is, all sensible things (*omnia sensibilia*), are to be despised (*contemnenda*)” (1.20.37). The underlying logic is that when we love the world, our thinking is entirely dominated by the material. Lust of the flesh leads to our perception of the sun and moon as divine (1.20.37); curiosity leads to an inquiry that takes for granted that knowledge may be acquired through the exploration of the “material mass” known as the world; pride leads to a belief that this world is heaven. Augustine is especially emphatic about the connection between curiosity

⁸⁷ Procope, p. 1304.

and delusion, for the curious person's search for knowledge is always pre-determined by his enslavement to the material; even if he eventually submits himself to the authority of the Church, still the sin of curiosity determines that he will rely upon material categories to understand Christian teaching (1.21.38).⁸⁸ In the roughly simultaneous *On Genesis, against the Manichees*, Augustine matches each sin with some Manichean doctrine. The proud, then, in a kind of perverse 'projection', believe that their souls have the same nature as God; those ensnared by the lust of the flesh attribute responsibility for their sins to some other self, captive to the "nation of darkness"; and the curious pursue spiritual knowledge with a "fleshly eye" (2.26.40). We will return later to see how Augustine develops this use of the triad into a rigorous account of the gradual destruction of our capacity to judge.

He frequently uses one stark word to describe such misperceptions caused by the love of the world: vanity. Vanity is most frequently contrasted with truth.⁸⁹ Thus, it is often used to describe or is paired with superstition⁹⁰ and fantasy.⁹¹ In *On Genesis, against the Manichees* and *On Music* 6, the term is generally used in references to the Manicheans' false beliefs⁹² (though once it is also used as an adjective with pride).⁹³ In *Ways of Life*, Augustine provides his most developed account of vanity to that point. After he has defined temperance with plentiful evidence from the New Testament, including our triad, he demonstrates to the

⁸⁸ Procope notes that the connection between *curiositas* and materialism occurs for the first time in *mor.*, though both are concerns in Augustine's earlier works (p. 1305 n25). *Curiositas* had a long history in pagan thought. Dideberg points to its discussion in the likes of Cicero and Seneca (p. 185). As well, as O'Connell shows, Augustine's analysis of *curiositas* fits with much of what Plotinus has to say about knowledge according to the senses (pp. 175-182). Yet with *curiositas*, as in so much else, Richard Newhauser demonstrates how Augustine "was the first to take many of the more or less disconnected strands of thought on the sin from a variety of intellectual backgrounds and put them into a unified context, one which included the broadest implications of the term" (p. 99). Newhauser nicely contrasts Augustine's understanding of *curiositas* with earlier Christian authors including Tertullian, Origen and Ambrose, and then goes on to show the dramatic influence Augustine's analysis has throughout the Middle Ages.

⁸⁹ For examples of this in texts we treat of in this chapter, see *Gn. adv. Man.* 1.1.1, *mor.* 1.13.23, 1.18.34, *vera rel.* 49.95, *conf.* 4.11.16.

⁹⁰ See examples of *superstitio* in *vera rel.* 2.2, *mor.* 33.72, *conf.* 4.1.1.

⁹¹ As with *imaginatio* (*mor.* 17.32, *conf.* 5.10.20), *phantasma* (*mus.* 16.52) and *simulacrum* (*Gn. adv. Man.* 1.23.37, *vera rel.* 2.2).

⁹² *Gn. adv. Man.* 1.1.1, 1.3.5, 1.4.7, 1.23.47; *mus.* 6.13.39; 6.16.52.

⁹³ *Gn. adv. Man.* 2.25.38.

Manicheans that the Old Testament too upholds temperance as a godly virtue. He does so by showing parallel verses on temperance in the Old and New Testaments. The New Testament verse is Romans 12:2, which, as it commands us not to be *conformed* to the world, Augustine also takes to be instructing us not to *love* the world. The next move is most essential for us, as Augustine turns to Ecclesiastes: “Vanity of vanities...vanity of vanities! All is vanity” (1:2). Augustine then provides a summary of Ecclesiastes in which Solomon’s purpose is to enjoin temperance on his readers. Wise Solomon is not declaring that God’s good creation is vain; rather, he is indicating that when we love the world, we subject ourselves to it and so are “cheated and misled by unreal goods.” Augustine refers to such things as being “beneath” us. If we act virtuously, then creation is subject to us; the temperate man “uses” (*utentis*) the things of the world like an employer rather than a lover (1.21.39).⁹⁴

In *On True Religion*, this point is developed further as the misperception of creation (as vain) is contrasted with judgment; we already considered at length in our last chapter how in this text Augustine identifies the role of the Spirit in making us capable of judgment. He argues that whereas when we love the world we attribute false qualities to it, by judgment we discern a thing’s nature and can so order our loves. As in *Ways of Life*, Augustine quotes Ecclesiastes, and he argues that Solomon’s point is not that creation is vain, but rather that *vain people* misperceive creation as vain. While this interpretation may seem like something of a stretch, an etymological point clarifies what Augustine is doing: according to Paul M. Blowers in his survey of Patristic interpretations of vanity, Augustine’s Old Latin text of Ecclesiastes 1:2 reads *vanitas vanitantum*, which is “best rendered ‘vanity of the vain.’”⁹⁵

⁹⁴ *mor.* 1.21.39 (CSEL 90: 45): “Habet igitur uir temperans in huiusmodi rebus mortalibus et fluentibus uitae regulam utroque testamento firmatam, ut eorum nihil diligat, nihil per se appetendum putet, sed ad uitae huius atque officiorum necessitatem quantum sat est usurpet utentis modestia, non amantis affectu.”

⁹⁵ See Blowers, *Drama of the Divine Economy: Creator and Creation in Early Christian Theology and Piety* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) p. 208. Blowers further notes, following Hill, “that the participle *vanitantum* (instead of the genitive-plural noun *vanitatum*) is from a verb ostensibly peculiar to North African Latin, and requires the neologism ‘vanitators’ to translate it adequately”; see p. 208, n89. I think Blowers’ brief treatment of Augustine on vanity suffers from assuming that Augustine’s early and late interpretations of vanity are consistent. In his early and middle works, vanity is used to describe a misperception of creation and those

Who are these vain people? Those who pursue that which is lowest as though it were highest. They do not discern the nature of created things by judgment and, therefore, are not capable of ordering their loves. In particular, in a repeated point of this text, such vain people seek in creation the unity that exists only in God (21.41). This failure to discern the order of creation arises from a disordered relation to it: “If there are no vain people (*vanitantes*) there will be no vanity (*vanitas*)....Such a [vain person] as we have been speaking of wants to turn his mind to corporeal things and his eyes to God. He seeks to know carnal things (*intelligere carnalia*) and to see spiritual things (*videre spiritalia*). But that is impossible” (34.62).⁹⁶ The misperception of creation comes, then, from a misapplication of our cognitive faculties. Our minds are made to know the immaterial God, who is true unity, and to see material creation, which only participates in, and therefore imitates, that unity; indeed, it is precisely by knowing true unity, and judging all according to it, that we can see how all things bear hints of God’s goodness. In order to express this, Augustine writes, “Do not let us seek the highest in the lowest, nor envy (*inuideamus*) the lowest. Let us judge these things lest we be judged along with them (*Iudicemus ea, ne cum ipsis iudicemur*)” (34.63). This hints at what will become more explicit later in terms of our middle place: we are to be above natural things as their judge, not be judged with them when in lust we subject ourselves to them.

II. The Comprehensiveness of 1 John 2:16

Our primary focus, to which we now turn, is the four instances in which we see Augustine attempting to explain *why* these three sins comprehend sinful love of the world. It is typical of his probing mind, especially when it comes to the treasures buried within

who hold such misperceptions as a result of their love of the world. In later passages that Blowers refers to (such as *en. Ps.* 118-12.1), Augustine understands creation’s subjection to vanity as a legacy of the Fall that God will finally overturn in the age to come. Certainly these two understandings of vanity do not disagree with one another, but there does seem to me to be a shift in emphasis that requires some explication.

⁹⁶ *vera rel.* 34.63 (CCSL 32: 228): “Tolle itaque uanitates et nulla erit uanitas...Ille autem uult mentem conuertere ad corpora, oculos ad deum. Quaerit enim intelligere carnalia, et uidere spiritalia; quod fieri non potest.”

Scripture, that Augustine seeks to determine why *these three* encompass the great variety of human sin. And so we see him experiment four times within a roughly twenty year period (from 391 in *On True Religion* to *The Trinity* 12 in ca. 418) with ways in which our triad might encompass a disordered love of the world.

1. On True Religion

In *On True Religion*, the triad's comprehensiveness comes from how each class of sin is a perverse imitation of a particular person of the Trinity: pride is a distorted desire for power, which corresponds to the Father as Creator (44.84-85), curiosity is a distorted desire for knowledge, which corresponds to the Son as Truth (49.94), and carnal pleasure is a distorted desire for a kind of material harmony (*convenientia*) which corresponds to the source of order, the Spirit (39.72). This interpretation has been taken to be central to an understanding of Augustine's subsequent use of the triad by such influential scholars as Olivier du Roy and James O'Donnell. We will engage with O'Donnell below, as he takes this passage in *On True Religion* to be the interpretive key to our triad in the latter half of *Confessions* 10. We will consider Du Roy at this juncture, as he devotes most of his attention when discussing 1 John 2:16 to *On True Religion*. However, he does not mention any other examples in which Augustine explicitly connects the Johannine triad with perverse imitation of God as Trinity. He points out other instances in later works (*Contra Secundinum* 2.10 and *City* 12.1) in which sin is triadically explicated in terms of false imitation of the Triune persons.⁹⁷ Yet the triads in both these two texts *do not correspond to our triad*; curiosity, most notably, is nowhere to be found. As well, while du Roy also notes that in *Confessions* 2 (6.13) our triad is present, it is included along with many other sins, as Augustine explains that the human desire expressed in each sin is fulfilled only in God. In this case, Augustine is clearly referring to the Triune God as a unity, and not with any particular persons. The only

⁹⁷ Du Roy, p. 348.

explicit text, then, in which Augustine connects the sins of our triad with the Trinitarian persons is this passage in *On True Religion*. My conclusion is that he attempted this explanation of the triad once, and abandoned it. We will be providing an alternative framework to understand the comprehensiveness of our triad: the one evident in *On Free Will 2*, *Confessions* 10, and *The Trinity* 12.

2. On Free Will 2

In *On Free Will 2*, the triad is inclusive of disordered love of the world because it encompasses the three directions towards which human beings in their middle position may turn when turning from God: (1) to self, (2) to others or (3) to lower things.⁹⁸ Our subjection to God is the basis for a right relation to each of the latter. Du Roy notes briefly that Augustine's use of the triad in *On Free Will* is different than that in *On True Religion*; specifically, he sees the triad mapped on to love of self, exterior things and inferior things, which recurs in *Confessions* 10, but he does not see how this corresponds specifically to self, other, and lower things, and because of this he does not see that this same logic underlies the triad in *The Trinity* 12.⁹⁹

Augustine uses the triad in *On Free Will 2* when defending the goodness of free-will in the last third of Book 2. His interlocutor, Evodius, doubts free-will's goodness because it is corruptible. Augustine's response locates free-will in the middle of a hierarchy of goods. The highest goods, the virtues, are the only ones which are not corruptible; the intermediate goods, our 'powers of soul', including free-will, are corruptible; as are the lowest goods, including our bodies (2.18.50). The corruption of free-will is not inherent to the created order, but only occurs as a *process*, or what Augustine refers to as a "turning" (*conversio*) of the will. The intermediate goods remain good so long as they subordinate themselves and

⁹⁸ I am using the term "creation" to denote the world as an ordered whole and "lower things" and "nature" to denote non-human creatures, or what Augustine refers to in *doc. Chr.* as "inferior things" (1.24.25).

⁹⁹ Du Roy, p. 348.

cleave to the highest good; corruption comes when the will seeks to abandon this order: “So it happens that the good things sought by sinners cannot in any way be bad, nor can free will be bad, for we found that it was to be numbered among the intermediate goods. What is bad is its *turning away (aversio)* from the unchangeable good and its *turning down to (conversio)* changeable goods” (2.19.53; italics mine and translation altered). Our triad appears as the three consequences of the will’s *turning away* from God and *turning down* to creatures:

The will, therefore, which cleaves to the common and unchangeable good, obtains human beings’ first and best good things though it is itself only an intermediate (*medium*) good. But the will which turns from the unchangeable and common good and turns to (1) its own private good (*proprium bonum*) or to anything (2) exterior (*ad exterius*) or (3) inferior (*ad inferius*) sins. (1) It turns to its private good, when it wills to be governed by its own power; to what is (2) exterior, when it is eager to know what belongs to others and not to itself; to (3) inferior things, when it loves bodily pleasure. In these ways a man becomes (1) proud, (2) inquisitive, (3) licentious and is taken captive by another kind of life which, when compared with the life we have just described, is really death. (2.19.53; translation altered)¹⁰⁰

Sin, then, is the overturning of the order God established in creation. By this turning, the human person totters off in three possible directions:

- (1) in pride, from God to *ourselves*;
- (2) in curiosity, from ourselves to *others*;
- (3) in carnal lust, to *lower things*.

While our triad is structured as a descent--from God to human beings to nature--it is not clear whether Augustine sees a causal logic at work. That is, does pride somehow *lead* to curiosity which *leads* to carnal lust? We suggested that there seemed to be a causal connection in *Ways of Life* between curiosity and pride. In our two later texts, as we will see, there is a definite sense of such a gradual descent into a greater overturning of creation’s order, and, therefore, a

¹⁰⁰ *lib. arb.* 2.19.53 (CCSL 29: 272): “Voluntas ergo adherens communi atque incommutabili bono impetrat prima et magna hominis bona, cum ipsa sit medium quoddam bonum. Voluntas autem auersa ab incommutabili et communi bono et conuersa ad proprium bonum aut ad exterius aut ad inferius peccat. Ad proprium conuertitur, cum suae potestatis uult esse, ad exterius, cum aliorum propria uel quaecumque ad se non pertinent cognoscere studet, ad inferius cum uoluptatem corporis diligit. Atque ita homo superbus et curiosus et lasciuus effectus excipitur ab alia uita, quae in comparatione superioris uitae mors est...”

greater delusion. As well, there is an ambiguity as to the nature of the pride that belongs to the triad: he seems to suggest that there is a “turning away” from God *and then* (1) pride, (2) curiosity and (3) carnal lust. But could that “turning away” itself be identified as pride, and, if so, how does that relate to pride as the first sin of our triad? Augustine will resolve this confusion in later uses of the triad. What *is* clear is that the comprehensiveness of the triad consists in its inclusion of all possible places we may turn when we abandon our middle place under God. With this turning away from God, we abandon our place *in* creation and so distort our relation *to* creation.

3. The Trinity

Instead of proceeding chronologically, we will jump ahead to *The Trinity* 12, and then return to *Confessions* 10. We do so because *The Trinity* 12 follows the same logic as *On Free Will* 2 in mapping each sin of our triad on to one of the three possible directions human beings stumble to when they turn from God. In Book 12, in his on-going search for the true image of God within human beings, Augustine wants to distinguish between the ‘outer man’, which we share with the animals, and our ‘inner man’, the home of reason where the image of God is to be found (12.1.1). He distinguishes a higher, masculine role for reason that contemplates the eternal nature of God (wisdom) and its subordinate, feminine role that attends to our life in the world (knowledge). Prior to the Fall, the human mind was integrated by the appropriate delegation of roles and the subordination of the lower to the higher. With specific reference to judgment, this integration ensured that our judgment about the changeable things was according to unchangeable things (*iudicare*) (12.2.2). With the Fall, this all comes undone. Rather than our action in the world being judged and ordered by contemplation of the eternal (knowledge and love of God), our action in the world is judged and ordered by love of the world.

Our triad first appears when Augustine uses it to encompass the sins that ensue when we turn from God.¹⁰¹ The soul turns from God by “loving its own power (*Potestatem quippe suam diligens anima*)” (12.9.14)¹⁰². Notably, for our purposes, Augustine tells us that with this turn the soul rejects the laws by which God attempts to govern the universe, and attempts instead to govern by its own. The rebellious soul, in other words, attempts to establish its own basis for judgment and order. How is it that we could rebel against the very order of things? By acting in and through the only created good that we can make any such claim to being “*ours*”: our bodies. Our disordered immersion in the material, then, is the consequence of a *spiritual* disorder. This firmly prevents any inherent relation between the human body and sin. The result of this spiritual disorder is that rather than my action in the world being ordered and judged according to knowledge and love of God, I instead refer all things to my body’s life in the world. To love one’s own power, then, is to engage reality primarily through the senses.

Now appears our triad as providing a comprehensive classification of human sin: “In this way [the soul] defiles itself foully with a delusional fornication (*phantastica fornicatione*) by referring (*referens*) all its business to one or other of the following ends: (1) curiosity, searching for bodily and temporal experience through the senses [*self*]; (2) swollen conceit, affecting to be above other souls which are given over to their senses [*others*]; (3) or carnal pleasure, plunging itself in this muddy whirlpool [*lower things*]” (12.9.14). We have,

¹⁰¹ *Trin.* 12.9.14 (CCSL 50: 368-369): “Potestatem quippe suam diligens anima a communi uniuerso ad priuatam partem prolabitur, et apostatica illa *superbia*, quod *initium peccati* dicitur, cum in uniuersitate creaturae Deum rectorem secuta legibus eius optime gubernari potuisset, plus aliquid uniuerso appetens atque id sua lege gubernare molita, quia nihil est amplius uniuersitate, in curam partilem truditur et sic aliquid amplius concupiscendo minuitur, unde et *auaritia* dicitur *radix omnium malorum*; totumque illud ubi aliquid proprium contra leges quibus uniuersitas administratur agere nititur per corpus proprium gerit quod partiliter possidet, atque ita formis et motibus corporalibus delectata, quia intus ea secum non habet, cum eorum imaginibus quas memoriae fixit inuoluitur et phantastica fornicatione turpiter inquinatur omnia officia sua ad eos fines referens [1] quibus curiose corporalia ac temporalia per corporis sensus quaerit, [2] aut tumido fastu aliis animis corporeis sensibus deditis esse affectat excelsior, [3] aut coenoso gurgite carnalis voluptatis immergitur.”

¹⁰² This is most decidedly a disordered self-love. See O’Donovan’s careful reading of positive and negative self-love in *Trin.* 8 to 15, *Problem*, pp. 75-92.

then, the three options for the soul once it abandons God: in curiosity, it seeks experience entirely through itself; in pride, it seeks to dominate others; and in carnal pleasure, it seeks to enjoy lower things. Thus once again our triad is mapped on to the order of creation in terms of self, other and nature.

Augustine's description of our triad as involving "delusional fornication" (*phantastica fornicatione*) is a pregnant one. With 'fornication' he indicates the gravity of the betrayal that is the love of the world; he does so with a Scriptural basis: he uses Paul's claim that fornication is a "sin against the body" (1 Cor 6:18; 12.10.15). More importantly, the language of fornication in this passage recalls the language of conception in Book 9 which we discussed in our previous chapter. The sexual connotation of each is enough to indicate a relation between them. Even more substantively, Augustine's descriptions of both include our activity of "referring". In fornication, we "drag the deceptive semblances of bodily things inside", which ultimately means that "in its private avarice [the soul] is loaded with error and in its private prodigality it is emptied of strength (*privatim auara fetatur erroribus et privatim prodiga inanitur uiribus*)" (12.10.15). This description of fornication parallels the description of conception in Book 9, which describes how love conceives and cleaves to a word. The soul's love for its own power means that its desire for knowledge arises entirely from disordered love; and so, all of the 'referring' that we do to 'make sense' of things is through our senses.

The result of such 'fornication' is evident in its pairing with 'delusion'. We see again the connection between love of the world and error. While Augustine nowhere uses the term 'vanity' in *The Trinity*, in his early and middle works, as we showed above, *phantasma* is often paired with *vanitas*. Here, with the turn from love of God to love of one's private power, we become unhinged from the basis of our judgment and our thinking becomes increasingly deluded. Delusion exhausts us precisely because, in our misperception, we are

constantly demanding of created things what they cannot provide. The result, as the repeated use of ‘private’ indicates, is we received the privacy we desired; but all we can ultimately claim is “*ours*” is error and exhaustion.

The triad appears again soon to describe the descent by which creatures who are made to enjoy contemplation of the immaterial God become so wedded to the material. As a snake slithers, so we fall little by little (12.11.16). Again, then, as above, pride is indicated as the beginning of the decline; and once again the sins of the triad follow quickly thereafter, but this time there is a causal connection: “... (1) out of greed to experience his own power he tumbled down at a nod from himself into himself as though down to a middle level [*self*]. And then, (2) while he wants to be like God under nobody [*others*], (3) he is thrust down as a punishment from his own half-way level to the bottom [*nature*], to the things in which the beasts find their pleasure” (12.11.16; see the triad also in 12.11.15).¹⁰³ The turn from God is described as a turn to the middle, but the reality is that we cannot remain in the middle apart from God. Love of one’s own power has a momentum that is unstoppable; self, other and nature, in this case, describe the steps of our descent. Notably, the epistemological consequence of proudly loving one’s own power is curiosity: a search for experience that may be gained entirely through *my* body, that is, my senses. Yet this very will to autonomy ensures that one cannot serve, obey or share with others and so one must dominate them (pride); and that quest for domination leads one to establish power over inferior things (carnal pleasure).

What is especially striking about the triad in *The Trinity* is how central curiosity is; it is the first of our triad listed and so, Augustine seems to suggest, the immediate consequence of pride and the determinative step towards delusion. Whereas in *On Free Will* curiosity was

¹⁰³ *Trin.* 12.11.16 (CCSL 50: 370): “[1] Cupiditate uero experiendae potestatis suae quodam nutu suo ad se ipsum tamquam ad medium proruit. [2] Ita cum uult esse sicut ille sub nullo, [3] et ab ipsa sui medietate poenaliter ad ima propellitur, id est ad ea quibus pecora laetantur...”

mapped onto a disordered love of others, in *The Trinity* it corresponds to disordered love of oneself. The relation between our proud rebellion against God and curiosity is especially crucial for us; curiosity is a consequence of pride, because when what I love above all else is my own power, then my knowledge of self, others and nature is determined by a desire for experience centred entirely in myself as an autonomous agent. I cannot recognize others or creation as having a value independent of myself, precisely because all is ‘made sense of’ in relation to my life in the world. Judgment is entirely separated from discernment and evaluation of all things as known and loved by God.

Augustine had prepared us for this central role curiosity plays in Book 12 by his earlier contrast between studiousness and curiosity in Book 10. We ought also to recall that Book 10 follows the discussion of the conceived-word and born-word in Book 9. He turns to explore studiousness at the beginning of Book 10 in order to refine our understanding of the relation between knowledge and love. He uses the example of a studious person who hears a word he does not know the meaning of; the argument turns on what he *does* know. First, he knows that the word is, in fact, a word; that is to say, he has categorized it as a sign that has meaning, and not simply a piece of noise. If he thought it merely noise, he would not expect meaning. Yet his desire to know does not simply arise from his knowledge that words have meaning. He further knows, that communication is beautiful and it is useful for human society. Crucially for us, the approval of communication as beautiful arises from a judgment by “the light of truth” (10.1.2). The studious person’s judgment, then, arises from a rightly-ordered love which, in the subsequent explication of it, determines a rightly-ordered relation to lower things. The studious person’s desire for knowledge is not defined by desire to experience his own power, but instead by the goodness of communication with others. Augustine specifies that the studious person sees that communication is *useful* (*utilitas*). That initial judgment by the love of truth has fostered a desire to learn the meaning of the word

which orients his action. The words are put at the service of some higher enjoyment. Indeed, in Augustine's description of the studious person, he clearly has in mind enjoyment of human community: for apart from language "an assembly of human beings would be worse...than any kind of solitude" (10.1.2). Thus, the studious person's desire to learn the meaning of a word follows from a judgment about the beauty of knowledge and the usefulness of communication with others.

This is in contrast to the curious person who is "carried away by the mere love of knowing unknown things for no known reason...yet not even he loves the unknown. Indeed, it would be truer to say that he hates the unknown, since he would like nothing to be unknown and everything known" (10.1.3)¹⁰⁴. We can combine this with Augustine's brief description of curiosity later in Book 12 as one's "searching for bodily and temporal experience through the senses" (12.11.16). In other words, what the curious man seems to enjoy about knowing is simply the experience of knowing; it does not serve to further orient him in his knowledge and love of neighbour or God, instead it begins and ends with an indiscriminate desire for stimulation. The indiscriminate nature of this desire corresponds to Augustine's description that the curious man "would like nothing to be unknown"; in the latter phrase, Augustine is not criticizing the desire for a comprehensive knowledge of things, rather it is a desire for knowledge that does not have any end in view. And because there is no end in view, this recalls how the covetous people in Book 9 are described as having desires that cannot be satisfied. The descriptions, then, of how the curious are "carried away (*rapiatur*)" (10.1.3) by their desire and have a "ravenous appetite (*ardentissimo appetitu*)" (10.2.4) for knowledge indicate that this is a disordered love that conceives judgments and births actions without any direction other than the frenzy of a restless self. Whereas the

¹⁰⁴ *Trin.* 10.1.3 (CCSL 50: 315): "...sed solo amore rapiatur incognita sciendi, discernendus quidem est ab studiosi nomine iste curiosus; sed nec ipse amat incognita, immo congruentius dicitur, 'odit incognita,' quae nulla esse uult dum uult omnia cognita."

studious person's love of knowledge is ordered by his love of God, and is useful for the enjoyment of human sociality, the curious person's love of knowledge is ordered by his desire for experience, and he enjoys the thrill of plundering the unknown as an end in itself.¹⁰⁵

4. *Confessions* 10

The last text we will treat, though chronologically the second, is *Confessions* 10 in which Augustine makes extended use of the triad. We have saved this for last for two reasons. First, because of a notable difference between the structure on which he maps the triad: in *Confessions* 10 our triad does not correspond to self, other and nature as in *On Free Will* and *The Trinity*, but instead to the pattern of ascent that recurs throughout *Confessions* of *exteriora*, *interiora* and *superiora*. Second, because the triad is used not only to describe the dissolution of the capacity for judgment, but also the Christian's attempt to resume his middle position by continence. Thus while the triad in *Confessions* 10 is not in terms of self, other and nature, it is still structured by our middle place in creation. We will see that the pattern of *exteriora*, *interiora* and *superiora* in the first half of *Confessions* 10 describes the ascent of Augustine's mind by which he assumes the human being's middle position and is ordered in relation to lower things, as his mind is subject to Truth and he can judge accordingly; in the second half, that same pattern is used again to describe his struggle to regain our middle position, especially in terms of loving others as his equals. Remarkably the ascent to resume the middle position by subjecting himself to Truth in the first half is mirrored in the (attempted) ascent *to the neighbour* in the second half.

¹⁰⁵ Griffiths captures the contrast well: "Curiosity's desire is closed, limited by the object it wants to know considered in isolation: the knowledge curiosity seeks is wanted as though it were the only thing to be had. The *amor sciendi* of the studious man, by contrast, is open--open, that is, to a knowledge of things that includes their relation to God"; see his 'The Vice of Curiosity', *Pro Ecclesia*, (December 2006), 47-59 (p. 50).

We will read *Confessions* 10 as a text primarily about judgment.¹⁰⁶ In so doing, we are contributing to what is undoubtedly one of the most contentious questions in the interpretation of *Confessions*, the coherence of Book 10.¹⁰⁷ There is considerable scholarly debate about how exactly the first half of the book (the journey through memory) relates to the second half of the book (the examination of conscience). There are two approaches that seem to me to be especially helpful, and which we will be developing further with our focus on judgment. The first is the idea that the whole book finds its unity in memory. As Robert Markus suggests, Book 10 stands as “the centre” of *Confessions* because it is “an exploration of the discovery of man as a diachronic being”; because of this, we are forever “caught in the tension between the past and the future.”¹⁰⁸ While this provides a helpful ‘big picture’ account of the unity of Book 10, and it helps to explain how the book relates to *Confessions* as a whole, we need a more precise explanation for the structure and logic of the journey through memory. Thus, the second approach that deserves our attention is that of O’Donnell, who argues that the first part is a “mystical ascent” to Truth present inwardly to the mind, and that the second part is a *descent* as Augustine examines what sins prevent him from full union

¹⁰⁶ The relation between our triad and judgment is present in the passage from *conf.* 13 that we treated at length in the last chapter. The triad appears as the three animals that the living soul must tame on the sixth day of creation prior to the renewal of the image of God in us which brings with it our capacity for judgment: “Restrain yourselves from the monstrous savagery of pride, from the luxurious inertia of self-indulgence, and from sham pretension to knowledge, so that the wild beasts may become gentle, domestic animals responsive and snakes harmless” (21.30). We recall that Augustine takes the living soul to be that of the baptised Christian who has begun to restrain her lusts and is attempting to act morally; she advances in doing so by imitation of other wise Christians because she is not yet capable of judgment. We see, then, in *conf.* 13, that these three lusts must be overcome in order for us to be capable of judgment. In *conf.* 10 we will see how these lusts distort our capacity for judgment, thus demonstrating what Augustine affirms of the living soul in *conf.* 13.

¹⁰⁷ There is also the much laboured question of Book 10’s place within *conf.* as a whole. Some have argued that the entirety of Book 10 was written well after the rest of the work was completed and only inserted later; a more modest version of this argument holds that only the “examination of conscience” in the latter half was inserted after the fact (see O’Donnell for a summary of the debate, *Commentary* III, p. 153). O’Donnell’s blunt conclusion is right, in my estimation, that such arguments fail because of “the absolute lack of attestation or parallel” (*ibid.*). I am far more persuaded by Robert Crouse’s argument that the structure of *conf.* is an intricately conceived whole which follows the repeated pattern of ascent: (1) *exteriora* (Bks 1 to 9); (2) *interiora* (Bk 10); (3) *superiora* (Bks 11-13). For Crouse, then, the journey within in Book 10 is preparatory to the turn to Scriptural exegesis beginning with Book 11. See ‘*Recurrere in te unum*: The Pattern of St. Augustine’s *Confessions*’, *Studia Patristica* 14.3 (1976), 399-418.

¹⁰⁸ Markus, *Conversion and Disenchantment in Augustine’s Spiritual Career* (Villanova: Villanova University Press, 1989), pp.5-6.

with God. This closer reading of the text captures something of the drama of the journey through memory. We can develop the integral relation between ascent and descent even further, as we will see, if we recognize that it is not only that Augustine turns from ascent to descent in order to discover why his ascent failed; it is also the case that the ascent itself, through which he comes to a definition of happiness, *provides the basis* by which he can then judge himself. That is, after having defined happiness as joy in the truth, Augustine then searches himself to see what else he takes joy in.

To the first part of *Confessions* 10, then, the ascent to the standard of judgment. The opening words of *Confessions* 10 establish Augustine's purpose for the first part: "Let me know you, O you who know me" (10.1.1); and as he begins his ascent he sets out, we might say, his method, "But what am I loving when I love you?" (10.6.8). In other words, he is furthering his knowledge of God by seeking clarity on what it is he loves when he loves God. He continuously asks himself whether he has 'found' what he loves. The ascent proceeds by the repeated pattern from (1) *exteriora* to (2) *interiora*, then from (2) *interiora* to (3) *superiora*. As Denys Turner has demonstrated, *exterior* and *interior* do not have fixed referents, but are "correlative" terms. So, for example, Augustine can first distinguish the body as exterior to the soul, but then, as the journey continues, he can distinguish his imagination, which is turned toward the sensible, as exterior to his reason, which can know the immaterial.¹⁰⁹

The ascent begins as Augustine moves from an exhaustive questioning of *exteriora*, created things (1) in the external world, including his own body (10.6.9), (2) to *interiora*, the inner life of his soul (10.6.10). He notes that it is by his soul that he was able to "question" all created things about whether or not they are the God he loves. This "questioning", he

¹⁰⁹ Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) pp. 74-75.

specifies, is a function of judgment (*iudicare*). Augustine argues that creation appears beautiful to all; but to those who judge that beauty ‘speaks’ and says ‘we are not God’ (10.6.10). This is the first sense of judgment, then, in which we discern a thing’s nature according to its place in creation. This capacity to judge is then specified to depend upon the *exteriora* (senses) being ordered by *interiora* (reason). As the mind judges what the senses gather, creation’s beauty points beyond itself. The ascent will proceed by judgment, and it will conclude when Augustine encounters the Truth which underlies his capacity to judge.

Augustine then turns to the soul, and ascends within it. He states that he is not going to consider how his soul animates (1) his body or directs (2) his senses, but specifically (3) his memory. In other words, then, having turned to *interiora* within the soul, Augustine then proceeds to the highest activity of the soul in memory, *superiora*. Augustine makes this clear *after* the ascent in the memory in a rear-view glance at where he has been; for the sake of clarity, we will note his retrospective ordering of memories at the outset. He classifies the contents of his memory by means of a triad based on whether the memories are present “[1] through their images (as with material things), or by [2] being themselves present (as in the knowledge acquired through a liberal arts education), or by [3] registering themselves and making their mark in some indefinable way (as with emotional states that the memory retains even when the mind is not actually experiencing them...)” (10.17.26).¹¹⁰ One of the recurring themes of the ascent is the freedom memory provides as Augustine’s mind has a power over his memories.

Augustine discovers three types of memories:

(1) *Images of Sense Impressions* (8.13-8.14) Augustine begins his ascent through the memory with the *exteriora*: we are able to make images of all that we sense. This very

¹¹⁰ *conf.* 10.17.26 (CCSL 27: 168): “...per imagines, sicut omnium corporum, siue per praesentiam, sicut artium, siue per nescio quas notiones uel notationes, sicut affectionum animi--quas et cum animus non patitur, memoria tenet, cum in animo sit quidquid est in memoria...”

capacity of image-making enables the lowest degree of freedom. Not only can we make present what we have sensed by remembering it, we can further compare and distinguish between those images; and we can combine and recombine them by our imagination in ways that they do not exist in the world. This is the first step in which our memory subjects creation to us.

(2) *Knowledge (9.16-13.20)* The next set of memories belong to *interiora*, for they include the intelligible pieces of knowledge that are not derived from sensation but always already exist within our minds. Specifically, Augustine discusses what he learns from the liberal arts, including skills in debate, forms of questions, mathematics, etc. The superiority of this class of memories to the previous is twofold. First, it is by these types of memories that Augustine is able to order and judge what he senses. Second, this class of memories is ontologically superior to the previous one because what we learn from the liberal arts is present to our memory not as images but “...the things themselves” (10.17). These two come together in that it is their very presence to our memory which makes them the basis for judgment of our sensations.

(3) *Emotion (14.21-16.25)* What marks the memories of emotions as *superiora* is that these memories are recalled “not in the same way as the mind experienced them at the time, but the mode proper to the power of memory” (14.21). Thus he continues that one can remember feeling sad, happy, frightened, without experiencing those emotions *now*. Augustine notes that there is “nothing strange” about this when the pain was in the body. In other words, because the mind rules the body, it follows that remembering the body’s pain does not necessarily affect the mind. Yet Augustine has identified his memory with his mind. This means, then, that remembering pain should, in fact, lead to *feeling* pain. The relation between memory and mind then, is more complex than that of identity. Memories of emotions are available to be known, but because they are not felt, Augustine can stand apart

from them and evaluate and order them.¹¹¹ He can, in a very real sense, transcend this class of memories.

Yet Augustine still has not found what it is that he loves when he loves God. The ascent is not complete. He refines his search by asking what he is searching for when he searches for God. The answer to this question comes without hesitation or delay: happiness. How can he search for happiness? Because he remembers it—otherwise, he would not be looking for it. And he is not alone: all human beings, he observes, desire happiness. This raises the seemingly untenable conclusion that if all people desire happiness, they must have all experienced it at some point (20.29). In order to gain clarity about the nature of the memory of happiness, he seeks to identify which class of memories contains happiness, whether memories of (1) images of sense impressions (*exteriora*); (2) what he learned in the liberal arts (*interiora*); (3) or emotions (*superiora*). He concludes that the final class of memories is the right fit, because one can remember happiness while being miserable; as with memories of other emotions, the remembering of it does not correspond to one's current state (21.30).

The question, then, is *when* was Augustine happy? But he is not the only one who wants to be happy. So, more precisely, when was *everyone* happy? Augustine notes the diversity of ways that people pursue happiness: some enter military service and others decidedly do not. Augustine concludes that this diversity arises from different people enjoying different activities. This adds a crucial precision to the desire for happiness, that it is a desire for enjoyment. When happiness is mentioned, we remember what we enjoyed; we

¹¹¹ That the ascent proceeds by judgment is made more explicit in another rearview glance at his journey prior to the conclusion of Book 10. Augustine addresses Christ, the Truth, and re-narrates the whole of his journey throughout Book 10 as occurring thanks to Truth's journeying with him. In particular he describes how in his survey of all that existed outside him in the world and within him in his memory, he asked Truth regarding each thing "whether it existed, what it was, how highly it should be regarded" (40.65). These are the three questions by which we come to a judgment; we recall, as we saw in the last chapter, how Augustine discussed them thus in his early works, and related them explicitly to the Trinity. In this instance, no allusion to the Trinity is present; what is more crucial is that it indicates that the journey proceeds by judgment.

enjoy different things, though we are all pursuing happiness (21.31). Yet all enjoyment is not created equal. The only true enjoyment is that which is in God: “*ad te, de te, propter te*” (22.32).

Do we desire happiness, then, because God is present ‘in’ our memory? He affirms that there is a sense in which this is true for him, because he was taught the Christian faith and since then he has associated all truth with God who is Truth (24.35). So God is ‘in’ his memory, but that leads inevitably to the question of ‘where’? Augustine once again lists a triad to review the ascent through his memory and see if his memory of God is within any of those classes: (1) images of material things; (2) emotional states; and (3) “where my mind itself is enthroned.” Notably, the second class of memories that Augustine listed earlier is not mentioned; instead, the class of emotional states has dropped to second place, and in third place, that of *superiora*, we have the place where “my mind itself is enthroned.” Augustine is referring here to his sense that his mind transcends what he remembers. There is an ‘I’ that could remember sadness without becoming sad. He has altered the triad in this case to emphasize his own transcendence over his memory as an analogy with God’s transcendence of his memory. Just as Augustine is not located in any of those classes of memory, neither is God. Indeed, Augustine rightly calls into question the very notion of “place (*locus*)” in memory (25.36). How futile it is, then, that he is thinking of the memory in spatial terms; even more absurd is the thinking of God as located some ‘where’ in his memory (26.37).

To say that God is Truth, then, as Augustine addresses God after dismissing thought of ‘place’, is to eschew conceptualizing the divine in terms of space or time. The only valid--though still woefully inadequate--comparison is between our transcendence of our memories and God’s transcendence of creation. What follows from this is that our love of truth does not arise from a memory that we can locate in space or time. The memory of happiness does not function like other memories; it is inherent to our very personhood. Apart from God’s

presence to us, we could not make any judgments at all; and with that presence comes our desire for happiness, which functions as criterion for judgment, as human beings order their lives around that pursuit. Augustine has ascended, then, through his memory to take up again his middle place, as he has subjected himself to Truth. All of creation is below him as he recognizes that the presence of Truth to him, which is the cause of his desire for happiness is the standard by which he makes judgments.

That the first half of *Confessions* 10 is an ascent to Truth as the standard of judgment is confirmed when we recognize the identical structure of ascent it has to those in *On True Religion* and *On Free Will II*. In *On True Religion*, Augustine specifies that there are two methods by which God treats the soul, authority and reason. After having discussed authority (25.46-28.50), he turns to reason and he explicates it according to our capacity to judge. He ascends hierarchically through creation (29.52), then demonstrates that human reason's capacity for judgment marks us as unique among all other earthly creatures (29.53); he then explores examples of our executing judgment (30.54-30.56), and finally concludes that our judgments would be impossible apart from a superior, immutable standard present to our minds: namely, God (31.57). The proof of the existence of God in *On Free Will 2* follows this same pattern, as Augustine first ascends through creation (2.3.7), then through the human mind to establish that judgment is superior to, and underlies, our primary human activities (2.3.8-2.5.12); his proof that such judgment is by God is considerably further developed than in *On True Religion*, and involves demonstrating that all human beings have a superior, immutable wisdom present to them which is clear from the universal desire for happiness (2.9.27-2.14.37). Also significant is the fact that, as we saw above, both of these earlier texts also include our triad because it is disordered love of the world which overturns our right relation to God as the standard of our judgments. This relation between our triad and the decline of our capacity to judge is made all the clearer in the second half of *Confessions* 10.

We now come to the transition to the second part of *Confessions* 10, in which Augustine then turns to judge himself by the Truth he has discovered is present to him. Having ascended to his middle place within his mind, he then turns outward to attempt to take up that middle place in the world. His definition of happiness as joy in the truth is what is most essential. Immediately after his discovery of Truth's inward presence to him as the source of his desire for happiness, he admits that he often takes joy in what is other than the truth:

Joys over which I ought to weep do battle with sorrows that should be matter for joy, and I know not which will be victorious. But I also see griefs that are evil at war in me with joys that are good, and I know not which will win the day. This is agony, Lord, have pity on me! It is agony!¹¹²

He is attempting to come to a more comprehensive and accurate self-knowledge by 'applying', as it were, what he has come to know about God; his knowledge of God as Truth, and of his desire for happiness as the desire for the enjoyment of that Truth, form the basis of his pursuit of self-knowledge.

And so the pattern by which Augustine ascended to judgment in the first half of *Confessions* 10 is mirrored in the self-judgment in the second half as our triad follows the pattern of movement from *exteriora* to *interiora*, then *interiora* to *superiora*. As we ascend through the human personality, however, we descend into more destructive sins; and, as we will see, because of this there is a marked decline in Augustine's capacity to judge where he has erred. Thus while he attempts to struggle back up to the middle, it gets more difficult. This is specifically due, as Crouse writes, to "the disintegration of human personality by the progressive separation and opposition...of reason and will."¹¹³ In opposition to O'Donnell,

¹¹² *conf.* 10.28.39 (CCSL 27:175): "Contendunt laetitiae meae flendae cum laetandis maeroribus, et ex qua parte stet uictoria nescio. Contendunt maerores mei mali cum gaudiis bonis, et ex qua parte stet uictoria nescio. Ei mihi! Domine, miserere mei!"

¹¹³ My reading of our triad in *conf.* 10 is indebted to Robert Crouse's article "*In multa defluximus*: Confessions X, 29-43, and Saint Augustine's Theory of Personality" in *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought: Essays in Honour of A.H. Armstrong*, ed. by H. J. Blumenthal and R. A. Markus (London: Variorum Publications, 1981), pp. 181-185. Our analysis of the three classes of sins accords with his as involving (1) "the excessive or

then, who sees each class of sin as corresponding to a Trinitarian person, we will demonstrate that the triad is defined primarily in terms of our relation to creation. Certainly the disordered love of God dampens the image of God in us, but I see no way in which Augustine suggests that each class of sin corresponds to one Trinitarian person. O'Donnell's contention that it does is based on assuming that Augustine's interpretation of the triad's comprehensiveness has not changed since *On True Religion*.¹¹⁴ We see that with *On Free Will* it has. While it is certainly the case that many triads in Augustine have Trinitarian significance, there is no basis to suggest that Johannine triad in *Confessions* 10 is one of them.

(1) *Exteriora: Concupiscence of the Flesh*: His evaluation of the sins he has committed in this first class depends upon his reason's ability to recognize a measured relation to each of his five senses and to order his actions accordingly. This measure consists in engaging the sense for what is either necessary (food) or useful (music), but both necessity and use arise according to the rational soul's ruling of the body. In other words, then, is creation subject to him, or is he, in lust, subject to it? We need not consider each sense closely in order to understand Augustine's argument regarding this class of sin. In principle, sin can occur when that measure is not met either by indulgence or excessive-restraint. In actual fact, though, Augustine is far more prone to over-indulgence (perhaps he is not alone!); the only case in which he mentions "exaggerated caution" is his frequent abstemious attitude towards music in church (10.33.50).

Yet sin occurs not only because the measure is recognized and broken, but also because Augustine finds it so difficult to discern where exactly the 'line' is. In his discussion of taste,

deficient love of the sensible"; (2) "subordination of reason itself to will"; (3) "reason's contradiction in the willing of a lie" (p.183).

¹¹⁴ O'Donnell cites only one later text in which he sees a correspondence between the triad and the Trinity, Letter 145 (*Commentary on Books 8 to 13*, p.207). There Augustine writes: "For, since everything that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and worldly ambition, a love for the sweetness of the earth often thrusts itself even upon those who prefer spiritual, invisible, and eternal things to such things, and it accompanies our duties with its delights" (*ep.* 145.2). Clearly the triad corresponds to spiritual, invisible and eternal, but it is not at all clear, and O'Donnell does not elucidate, why that triad corresponds to Father, Son and Spirit.

smell and hearing, he laments that he cannot get a handle on how much is too much, or, in the case of music, how little is too little. In the case of smell, he's quite confident that he is not prone to sin, yet he is not confident in his abilities to judge; he cannot, he says, "trust" his capacity to discern where exactly he has sinned (10.32.48). Similarly, on the question of what kind of music is most appropriate in church, while Augustine shares his thoughts on the matter, he qualifies that he is not "pretending to give a definite opinion" (10.33.50). His comment about hunger explains the cause of the shadowy nature of judgment: "what is enough for health is little for pleasure, and often it becomes uncertain whether the necessary care of the body needs more help or the deceitful pleasures of lust (*voluptaria cupiditatis fallacia*) demands attention" (10.31.44). The contrast between health's 'enough' (*satis*) and pleasure's 'little' (*parum*) makes especially clear how discernment of the measure is challenged; further, the description of the pleasures of lust as 'deceitful' (*fallacia*) is especially instructive. Reason is effected by lust such that our judgment about the 'measure' in creation is not clear to us. To know where the line is, and to cross it, is one type of sin; far more frightening is when we do not even begin to know where to draw that line. The continuing presence of lust, then, ensures that Augustine has not yet subjected creation to himself, as often he exceeds what is useful.

(2) *Interiora: Concupiscence of the Eyes*: In the case of curiosity, his desire to know is not determined by what he judges to be worthy of his attention, but instead by a disordered desire for stimulation. Augustine justifies his association of curiosity with concupiscence of the eyes because eyes are the most rational sense; for him, this is evident from the frequent associations we make between seeing and knowledge (as in *seeing* the point). At the beginning of his discussion of curiosity, Augustine writes that this sin is "more fraught with danger" than the last (10.35.54). Because the eyes have to do with knowledge the possibility of delusion is that much greater. With concupiscence of the flesh, sin occurred when we either failed to act in accord with the measure our reason recognized, or we could not clearly discern where that

measure lay; there was some objective good by which we judged our action, even if we were not always clear where to draw the line. With concupiscence of the eyes, in contrast, Augustine characterizes it as the desire to know “simply for the sake of knowing.” In other words, the senses are no longer at the service of some good that we judge in creation; rather, the senses are now ordered by the subjective desire for experience. The contrast is between a man’s lustful gaze at a beautiful woman and his gawking at a mangled corpse. With lust, there is a beauty present, that the man is responding to, albeit in a disordered way; with curiosity, he is drawn to what should prompt him to turn away.

The nature of this disorder is evident in what Augustine confesses is his most abiding temptation to curiosity: trivial distractions. He is not drawn to the more dramatic indulgences such as morbid shows, magic, signs and wonders; instead he is concerned with how frequently his attention is torn from what he is thinking about by, for example, a hare darting across the field. This is not to suggest that a hare in motion is not an example of God’s wondrous creation; it is indeed. The point is that Augustine does not turn to watch the hare because he recognizes it as a wondrous creation that he wants to know better; rather, it is a certain “inclination of [the] heart (*cordis inclinatione*)” that turns his attention to the hare without any real reason in mind (10.35.57).

The nature of this sin comes into even clearer focus if we recall the type of memory with which it is being implicitly contrasted. The *interiora* of memory includes what we remember through instruction in the liberal arts. Numbers, for example, give us the capacity to judge and order our experience. When we indulge in curiosity, there is no judgment or ordering at work because reason is swayed by a perverse desire for stimulation, and it is content with any stimulation that comes along.

(3) *Superiora: Pride of Life*: In the case of this sin, we reach the most heinous sin and therefore the greatest delusion. Augustine describes it thus: “This is the temptation to

want veneration and affection from others, and to want them not for the sake of (*non propter*) some quality that merits them, but in order to make such admiration itself the cause of joy” (10.36.59).¹¹⁵ The full depravity of this sin is indicated by the qualification that this desire for praise is not related to our desire to be judged deserving of it (we note the crucial word *propter*). In other words, joy in others’ praise is not subordinated to the possession of some especially praise-worthy characteristic. Instead, the joy itself is what is ultimate, regardless of whether the praise relates to some good or not. Augustine is no longer relying on any basis for judgment outside of himself. In the descent into delusion, joy has become completely detached from truth. In curiosity, there was a tenuous connection between subjective desire and the objective world, because what drew the attention was still ‘out there’, even if the response to it was disordered. In pride, the source of joy is defined entirely by *me*. There is no mistaking that this class of sin is worse than the other two when Augustine associates it with Satan:

So the affection and honor we receive come to be something we enjoy not for your sake but in your stead (*non propter te, sed pro te*), and in this way that enemy who decided to set up his throne in the far recesses of the north wins cronies in his own likeness, not to live with him in loving concord but to be tormented in his company, slaves in darkness and cold of him who imitates you in his perverse fashion. (10.36.59)¹¹⁶

The desire for others to praise me, as an end in itself, is equivalent to Satan’s sin because in both cases one sets oneself at the centre of things. If, at the very least, I wanted to be praised for some good, then I would remain wedded to a standard outside of myself. But the desire to be praised simply to be praised means I have alienated myself from any objective measure.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ *conf.* 10.36.59 (CCSL 27: 187): “...timeri et amari uelle ab hominibus non propter aliud, sed ut inde sit gaudium, quod non est gaudium.”

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* “...libeatque nos amari et timeri non propter te, sed pro te, atque isto modo sui similes factos secum habeat non ad concordiam caritatis, sed ad consortium supplicii, qui statuit sedem suam ponere in aquilone, ut te peruersa et distorta uia imitanti tenebrosi frigidique seruirent.”

¹¹⁷ Crouse intriguingly suggests that Dante’s image of Satan as frozen in ice at the depths of hell may have taken its inspiration from Augustine’s description of him here as “in darkness and cold”; see “*In multa defluximus*”, p. 183.

Because pride so removes us from any standard outside ourselves, Augustine struggles to come to any clarity in his self-judgment: “In other areas of temptation I have some shrewdness in self-examination, but in this matter almost none.” Whereas, with the other classes of sin, Augustine can withdraw the source of pleasure and see how much he misses it, his vocation demands that he continue to act in ways that will draw others’ approval (37.60). Augustine locates this challenge in the relation between continence and justice. In continence, our loves are restrained from disordered loves, whereas in justice, our loves are ordered for others’ good. Yet Augustine’s incontinent love of praise makes him unable to see whether he has the others’ good in mind or not. When another criticizes him, Augustine would like to say that he is saddened because the other’s criticism reveals they are mistaken; in other words, that this arises from a just love. But, in fact, Augustine notes that he is sometimes grieved when another praises qualities that Augustine does not like in himself. In such cases Augustine’s joy or grief arises not from the recognition of a good or sin in another, rather it is determined by a measure that he establishes himself (37.61). This issue comes into even clearer focus when he notes that he is less bothered when another is unjustly criticized than when he is. Evidently, then, Augustine is not yet just, for if he were, he would be bothered by unjust treatment of another as much as himself (37.61). He has not yet resumed his middle position, then, because he does not yet love others “as himself”, as equals under God.

We have followed Augustine, then, as his capacity for judgment has gradually fallen increasingly prone to darkness. I have argued that this is the case because the disordered nature of Augustine’s loves increasingly obscures any objective basis for judgment. With the first class of sins, lust of flesh, there is the sense that there is an objective measure that orders each sense’s use, and the primary problem arises when Augustine either crosses it, or is unsure of that measure. Reason still has a relation to creation’s order. In the second class,

the disordered desire for experience primarily determines attention rather than reason's recognition of some objective good. Yet, with curiosity, there remains a relation between the self and creation as 'out there'. With pride, however, all of creation is put in the service of the disordered human personality, which places itself at the centre, and so judgment has no clear basis because the order has been swallowed by the ravenous ego. In principle, Augustine recognizes that his relation to others should be just, yet he is unable to distinguish between moments when his joy arises from love of justice and those when from an incontinent love of self. This love of self prevents him from loving his neighbours as equals, and, so at fully assuming his middle position.

One way to trace the unfolding of this decline is to note the recurrence of the term vanity. We saw earlier how this term was present in Augustine's early works in connection with love of the world. This connection is present throughout *Confessions*.¹¹⁸ In *Confessions* 10, Augustine uses it to describe the last two classes of sin. Curiosity is a "vain desire (*vana...cupiditas*)" (35.54) which leads to "vain care (*vana cura*)" (35.56) and leaves the mind "stuffed with a load of much vanity" (my translation; 35.57). Similarly, pride is described twice as "vain glory (*vanae gloriae; vanius gloriatur*)" (38.63). This term literally encapsulates Augustine's analysis of the sin, as he wanted to be praised whether it was deserved or not. The use of the term 'vanity' with the last two sins of our triad, then, indicates how Augustine considers that his thinking has become increasingly deluded as he is unable to perceive the order of creation because of his disordered personality. We recall his statement in *On True Religion* that, to the vain, creation appears vain. In *Confessions*, we see again that vanity consists not in a creation that lacks purpose, but rather that the purpose is increasingly limited to whatever Augustine sinfully establishes it as.¹¹⁹ Creation's goodness

¹¹⁸ Most notably it appears in Augustine's discussion of his response to the death of his friend; see *conf.* 4.11.16.

¹¹⁹ This meaning of vanity is also clear in its use with reference to the death of Augustine's friend.

is seen through an ever narrowing lens whose focus is determined by the wants of a disordered self.

In the movement from lust of the flesh and lust of the eyes to pride, we see an attempted ascent from subjecting nature to us to loving our neighbours; or, as Augustine also puts it, from continence to justice: our loves are not only to be restrained from lust, they are also to be ordered according to the other's good (37.61). Specifically, as we saw above, Augustine is examining whether he loves others as himself, as equals. He concludes that, try as he might to convince himself he does, he does not: "Why does an affront offered to myself bite more deeply than one flung at another person in my hearing, given that the injustice of it is the same in either case?" (37.62). The basis of his judgments, then, is not what is just in such a way that both the other and himself are loved equally, instead his concern for justice is bound up with a self-love that prioritizes himself in a way that lessens his concern for the other's good. He cannot take up his middle place.

III. The Spirit and the Rehabilitation of Judgment

How, then, does the Spirit's gift of love restore us to our middle position and rehabilitate our capacity for judgment? In all the texts treated at length above, Augustine contrasts the deforming effects of love of the world with the reforming work of the Spirit, who unites us to the Son. The logic of Augustine's answer to our question is present as early as *Ways of Life*, in his first argument for the Spirit's divinity. Whereas love of the world leads us to misperceive creation as vain, the Spirit's gift of love re-orders our relation to creation; it is only because the Spirit is divine that it can affect such a transformation. Quoting Romans 5:5, Augustine writes that the love of God given to us by the Spirit ensures that "we are not confounded (*non confundamur*) with the things which are properly subject to us (*nobis debent esse subiecta*).” Several sentences later, he quotes Saint Paul, who says that all creation is *subject* to vanity (Romans 8:20). The argument for the Spirit's divinity then

follows: “And what is subject to vanity is unable to separate us from vanity, and to unite us to the truth. But the Holy Spirit does this for us. He is therefore no creature. For whatever is, must be either God or the creature” (1.13.23). The proof of the Spirit’s divinity, then, turns on how the Spirit’s love transforms our relation to lower things, making them subject to us; herein lies the first hints of how the Spirit brings us to resume our middle position by uniting us in love to the Son who is virtue, wisdom and truth.¹²⁰

This description of the Son, which is so compressed in *Ways of Life*, will be more fully elaborated in later works. In *The Trinity*, Augustine details how the saving work of the Spirit in uniting us to the Son involves the Son’s work as both the incarnate Christ of history and the Truth always present to our minds. By his incarnation, the Son is the object of our faith about his life, death and resurrection in history and our wisdom about the eternal: “our knowledge is Christ, and our wisdom is the same Christ. It is he who plants faith in us about temporal things, he who presents us with the truth about eternal things” (13.6.21). In order to explicate how the Spirit restores our judgment by uniting us with the Son, then, we must consider the Son both as the incarnate Christ and also as the Truth always present to our minds.

We turn first to how, by the Spirit’s love, our faith in Christ re-orders our relation to the temporal. Specifically we will see that it is by faith in, and imitation of, Christ as the just man that we become re-oriented to the reality of creation as known and loved by God. Whereas disordered love of the world leads to judgements confined to a temporal horizon, by faith in and imitation of Christ that horizon is opened up to include creation as known and loved by God. I take up my middle place by submitting myself to God in love, subjecting

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* 1.13.23 (CSEL 90:45): “*Creatura enim, neque hoc ego sed idem Paulus clamat, uanitati subiecta est. Neque nos potest a uanitate separare ueritatie connectere, quod subiectum est uanitati. Et hoc nobis spiritus sanctus praestat; creatura igitur non est, quia omne quod est, aut deus, aut creatura est.*”

lower things to myself, and attending to others as equals. We will see this by returning to later passages in two texts we have already treated above, *Confessions* 10 and *The Trinity* 13.

Confessions 10

If we pick up with *Confessions* 10 where we left off above, Augustine's failure to act justly towards his neighbour leads him to turn to the mediation of Christ. Before pursuing further the nature and result of that mediation, we need to establish how, while the Spirit is not explicitly mentioned in Book 10, we ought to discern its presence. Augustine reserves his fullest treatment of the Spirit to the final book of *Confessions*. He does so because the Spirit's creative and redeeming activity of uniting all things to the Son both makes explicit the full Triune activity that has undergirded the whole movement of *Confessions* to that point and also completes that movement to serve as the book's conclusion. One result of this structure is that Book 13 educates us to return to the earlier books ready to discern the Spirit's presence. Thus, a brief glimpse at Book 13 will prepare us to find the Spirit in Book 10. In Book 13 the Spirit is identified as the Love (*caritas*) who unites us to God and is contrasted with the lust (*cupiditas*) which plunges us into the unruly waters of sin (13.7.8). The Spirit as Gift (*donum*) brings us to rest in God in order that we may enjoy God; further, in his famous image, Augustine says that "my weight is my love" and he continues that "Your Gift sets us afire (*accendimur*) and we are borne upward; we catch his flame and up we go. In our hearts we climb those upward paths singing the songs of ascent" (13. 9.10). We can now return to *Confessions* 10.

We recall that we divided *Confessions* 10 into two ascents, the first through the memory to Truth's presence to our minds, and the second through the world to treat our neighbour justly. In the first ascent, as we noted, Augustine ascends by searching for what he

loves when he loves God (6.8). This ascent, then, presumes that he already loves God. His knowledge of God is, as it were, trying to catch up with his love of God. The Spirit is indubitably the source of this love. Further, when Augustine finally discovers that what he loves when he loves God is the happy life, we can see the Spirit's presence in his definition of happiness: "Now the happy life is joy in the truth (*gaudium de veritate*); and that means joy in you, who are the Truth, O God who shed the light of salvation on my face, my God" (23.33).¹²¹ To take joy in the truth depends on the Spirit, who alters our enjoyment by uniting us to the Son, who is Truth.¹²² Thus, the first ascent both assumes the Spirit's presence as the origin and sustainer of Augustine's love of God, and the climax of that ascent (the discovery of the definition of happiness) points to his need for the Spirit to further transform his joy to be in the Truth, the Son.¹²³

The Spirit's presence is made more explicit in the second ascent. The diagnosis of Augustine's disordered condition leads to the following prayer:

Give what you command, and then command whatever you will. You order us to practice continence. A certain writer tells us, 'I knew that no one can be continent except by God's gift, and that it is already a mark of wisdom to recognize whose gift (*donum*) this is.' By continence the scattered elements of the self are collected and brought back into the unity from which we have slid away into dispersion; for anyone who loves something else along with you, but does not love it for your sake, loves you less, O Love, ever burning, never extinguished, O Charity (*caritas*), my God, set me on fire (*accende*)! You command continence; give what you command, and then command whatever you will.(29.40)¹²⁴

¹²¹ *conf.* 10.23.33 (CCSL 27: 173): "Beata quippe uita est gaudium de ueritate. Hoc est enim gaudium de te, qui ueritas es, deus, *inluminatio mea, salus faciei meae, deus meus*."

¹²² That human happiness requires the activity of the Triune God is an early argument of Augustine's, as we see in *On the Happy Life*.

¹²³ Further, later in *Trin.*, Augustine will state that memory is an (admittedly crude and inadequate) image for the Father. The definition of happiness as joy in the truth arises from Augustine's examination of his memory. I suggest, then, that the universal desire for happiness is itself the ever-present vestige, however obscured, of the Triune image of God in us; and so, to take our joy fully in the truth the Father must send Son and Spirit to us, so that we recover the divine image, and attain happiness. The ascent to Truth, then, proceeds by the Spirit's love, and it also discloses how our ultimate happiness relies on the Spirit's further work.

¹²⁴ *conf.* 10.29.40 (CCSL 27: 176): "Da quod iubes et iube quod uis. Imperas nobis continentiam. *Et cum scirem, ait quidam, quia nemo potest esse continens, nisi deus det, et hoc ipsum erat sapientiae, scire cuius esset hoc donum.* Per continentiam quippe colligimur et redigimur in unum, a quo in multa defluximus. Minus enim te amat qui tecum aliquid amat, quod non propter te amat. O amor, qui semper ardes et numquam exstingueris, caritas, Deus meus, accende me! Continentiam iubes: da quod iubes et iube quod uis."

This passage anticipates the titles and activity of the Spirit we saw in Book 13. Continence only comes by God's Gift (*donum*), a title for the Spirit. Augustine uses the other title for the Spirit, Love (*caritas*), when addressing God; the request is to "set me on fire" (*accende*) which corresponds to the description of ascent in Book 13. Augustine's response, then, to the recognition that his joy is not entirely in the Truth, is to request the aid of the Spirit to unite him more fully with that Truth.

And so, just as the Spirit led Augustine to the Son's inward presence to his mind in the first ascent, in the second ascent, his prayer is ultimately answered as the Spirit leads him to the mediation of the incarnate Christ; however, whereas in the first ascent love led him to the presence of Truth to his mind, with the failure of his second ascent he is brought to the example of the Truth made flesh in the world. Thus Christ is presented both as the one in whom we have faith that we may be saved even in our sinful condition, and, more importantly for our purposes, as the example who orients our action. We recall from our last chapter that in *Confessions* 13 Augustine makes it clear that for those incapable of judgment, their action ought to be oriented by imitation of the wise. Thus we see that at the conclusion of *Confessions* 10, Augustine is saved from despair by faith and is directed how to act by Christ's example. Imitation of Christ as exemplar is a remedial means by which our capacity to judge is re-formed.

This is evident in that the mediation of Christ is explicated in relation to key terms from the second ascent: pride, curiosity and justice. Whereas our capacity to judge was swallowed by the gaping abyss of human pride and curiosity, in Christ, God challenges pride and curiosity, and he gives us a walking-talking picture of justice. Augustine is suggesting, then, that the Spirit re-orders our loves and so develops our capacity for judgment, as we have faith in, and imitate, the Incarnate Christ.

Augustine contrasts the mediation of Christ with that of Neoplatonic mediation and theurgy. When Platonists could not return to God in their own power, in curiosity they became deluded by fantasies; and so, in their pride, they believed that true mediators would not have a body, so they turned to immaterial beings they believed to be angels. The combination of curiosity and pride, then, leads them to abandon the world of flesh and blood and instead believe an elaborate mediation scheme involving disembodied spirits. Augustine boldly declares that, in doing so, they are left with Satan. Satan and the demons' (supposed) superiority lies in their lacking bodies, and yet, spiritually, their mediation accomplishes nothing, because they are as enslaved to sin as human beings (42.67). Curiosity's fanciful delusions and pride's attempted escape from bodies is challenged by the God who enters the world by Truth taking on flesh. The Incarnation grounds human redemption in the world God has made.

Further, Augustine also emphasizes Christ's justice. He became like us in his mortality, but he remained like God in his justice. This brief Christology is further developed in *The Trinity*, as we will see below. The primary point here is that God in Christ overcomes sin and death, because the true mediator is a just mortal who submits himself to death on a cross (43.68). Thus as human pride and curiosity are met by a God who takes on a body in the world, so human injustice is countered by a God who lives a perfectly just mortal life to the point of death. God's action in Christ assures us not only that we are loved, but further, that by faith, even we may receive the mediation of the one just man (43.69).

Confessions 10 concludes with the result of Augustine's faith in, and imitation of, Christ in the description of the eucharist. This description points to a re-ordered relation of the self towards God, others and lower things; thus it is a picture of a Christian taking up his middle place:

Your only Son, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, has redeemed me with his blood. Let not the proud disparage me, for I am mindful of my

ransom. I eat it, I drink it, I dispense it to others, and as a poor man I long to be filled with it among those who are fed and feasted. And then do those who seek him praise the Lord (10.43.70).¹²⁵

We can briefly see how this description enacts a re-ordered relation to God, to lower things and to others. First, Augustine presents his regular reception of the eucharist as what sustains him despite being overwhelmed by sin; it indicates, then, humble subjection to God. Second, Augustine describes his reception of the eucharist, using sensory language, and so we are given a picture of the senses used to their proper end. Third, he also details how he distributes the eucharist to others, and how he desires to stand with his fellow Christians at the feast. This sharing of what he receives from God and the community brought together by their common dependence on God's grace stands in marked opposition to Augustine's earlier description of his struggle with pride, in which all else was secondary to his love for adoration of others. The imitation of Christ and participation in the life of the Church are presented, then, as means by which our loves are re-ordered as we struggle to take up our middle position again; this is the process by which the Spirit re-habilitates our capacity for judgment.

The Trinity 13

In *Confessions* 10, the description of the mediation and of imitation of Christ follows the description of the results of disordered love of the world by our triad; this same structure and logic is also present in *the Trinity* Books 12 and 13. The Christology in *The Trinity* 13 reveals the full flowering of the description of Christ as the just man in *Confessions* 10. Especially relevant for our purposes is the fact that Christ's justice is consistently contrasted with the love of power.¹²⁶ We saw with our discussion of the triad that our thinking turns to

¹²⁵ *conf.* 10.43.70 (CCSL 27: 193): "Ille tuus unicus, in quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiae et scientiae absconditi, redemit me sanguine suo. Non calumnientur mihi superbi, quoniam cogito pretium meum et manduco et bibo et erogo et pauper cupio saturari ex eo inter illos, qui edunt et saturantur: et laudabunt Dominum qui requirunt eum."

¹²⁶ This Christology is anticipated, as is much else in the latter half of *Trin.*, in Book 8 when Augustine denies that God can be found in the search for power. Even if, he argues, such people could gain the power of angels,

focus entirely on our bodily life in the world when we proudly love our own power; the justice of Christ, then, is precisely the opposite of that disordered love as it gradually opens our minds to see all things in relation to God's knowledge and love of creation so that we judge accordingly.¹²⁷

In *The Trinity* 13 Augustine argues that Christ's life in the world, especially in his crucifixion, presents the shape of justice to us, as power is both used and deferred for the sake of justice. Christ's life cannot be 'made sense of' in material terms, precisely because the use and deferral of power points to some other referent by which he evaluates action. Further, we are advised to imitate Christ in "seeking to beat the devil at justice, not power (*iustitia quaererent diabolum vincere, non potentia*)" (13.13.17). Within the dense argument of the book, Augustine repeatedly explicates Christology in terms of the relation between justice and power.

First, Christ's saving work consists in his choice of justice over power. When human beings sinned, with Adam and Eve, God in his wrath gave human beings over to the devil, to justly suffer the punishment of death (13.12.16). Just as sin unfolds from a love for our own power, the devil loves power over justice. Out of this love, he unjustly put the innocent Christ to death. All those who believe in Christ are freed from sin and spiritual death because, in dying, Christ paid "the debt he did not owe himself" (12.14.18).

they would not actually be like the angels who do not regard their power as an end in itself, but they see it as from God and given in order to serve God. Even more significant than the angels is the example of Christ who, though he could raise the dead, did not call people to follow him in order to perform such miracles, but rather to attain rest (he quotes, among other verses, Matthew 11:28, "Come to me all you who labour and are heavy burdened..."). Throughout this description contrasts are stark: between the sound and fury of an outward search for power and the silence of one who follows Christ as he leads her to see God's presence always there "if we should wish to be with [God] (*si nos esse velimus apud eum*)" (8.7.11). This is not to turn us away from the world, but rather to point us to the constant presence of God to us as the means of rightly judging and thereby rightly ordering our relation to the world.

¹²⁷ Rowan Williams captures this beautifully: "For [the self] to see itself as acted upon by God is to know that it is known and loved by God; and in this knowledge it acquires *sapientia*, the knowledge of what is eternal. And what is eternal is the self-imparting activity of God as creator, as giver of *iustitia* and *sapientia* by which we come to share in his divine life, to actualise the divine act in our own temporal and finite context"; see "*Sapientia*", p. 320.

Second, Christ's nature is also explicated in terms of this relation between justice and power. He had to be human in order that he could be killed; and he needed to be divine so that all would know that he was choosing justice over power; if he were merely another human being, submitting to death would not be a free choice. In his resurrection, Christ puts power at the service of the justice that frees us from death. In this way, human beings have "justice set before us and power promised us" (13.14.18).

Yet precisely because we are in love with our own power, we do not want to have faith in Christ. The consequences of this are tragic, according to the larger thesis of Book 13 which, in brief, is that without faith human beings cannot be happy, because true happiness requires immortality. We become immortal through faith in Christ, who, in dying, sundered the devil's claim on humanity and, in rising again, conquered death (13.20.25).¹²⁸ To have this faith requires, first, that we receive it as a gift from God, in submission to the authority of Christ, and, second, that we wait patiently for the full realization of that gift in the life to come. Receiving and waiting, however, are postures precisely contrary to those in love with their own power. Augustine's analysis of happiness in Book 13 demonstrates how while all know and love happiness, our love of our own power means we define happiness as being within our own grasp. Thus, key to this analysis is an explanation of the universal desire for happiness *and* the propensity to act contrary to its realization. We will briefly consider the possible explanations Augustine entertains in order to show that they all turn on the relation between knowledge and love:

(1) Everyone wants happiness, but does not know what it is. If all knew what it was, there would not be such conflict between those who, for example, believe it lies in bodily pleasure, as opposed to those who believe it lies in virtue. Yet how can the universal desire

¹²⁸ O'Donovan concludes that Book 13 is "the most important 'retraction' Augustine ever wrote" in that he "has rebuilt the Platonic stairway of reason to the epistemological specifications of [Christian] authority" in *Problem*, p. 87.

for happiness lay behind all human pursuits if they do not know it? To explain the various ways human beings pursue happiness in this way would be to go against a central tenet of Augustine's theology, that we cannot love what we do not know.

(2) The desire for happiness involves both knowledge *and* ignorance. Augustine suggests that all know what happiness is, but not 'where' it lies: the recurring example is the question of whether it is in bodily pleasure or virtue. This would seem to define this knowledge as having essentially no content. If one seeks happiness in bodily pleasure, and it is not to be found there, does this not simply amount to one's *ignorance* of happiness?

(3) If all do not know what happiness is, perhaps all do not want it. We come again to that great crisis: whether or not we ought simply to abandon this idea altogether. That would quite easily explain why, if happiness lies in virtue, some do not want to be virtuous. Yet, Augustine says, surely we do not want to disagree with Cicero on this fundamental point that all desire happiness (not to mention disagreeing with Augustine himself on record in many earlier texts). Augustine is able to turn back from this possibility by exploring further, as he did in *On Free Will* 2 and *Confessions* 10, the relation between happiness and enjoyment.

(4) To be happy is to get what you want; that is, to get what you enjoy. We do know, then, what happiness consists in. This establishes the needed relation between love and knowledge, and also affirms the desire for it as universal. Further, that we enjoy different pursuits explains the variety of ways we pursue happiness. However, surely this variety needs to have some limits. As Cicero points out, no one would want to say that the criminal is happy who spends all day doing what he wants! The definition needs to include a strong qualification to exclude this possibility.

(5) Happiness consists in (i) getting what one wants and (ii) wanting nothing wrongly. In short, then, those who want to be happy should want, above all else, a good will. In so doing, they establish that they want only what brings true happiness.

It is the case, however, that while all know and love this happiness, we act contrary to our happiness by choosing to get whatever we want, even when we want the wrong things. In his discussion of how the philosophers attempt to redefine the nature of happiness in order to place it within the reach of human beings in this life, Augustine writes that they “will what [they] can do [because] he cannot do what [they] will (*id vult quod potest, quoniam quod vult non potest*)” (13.7.10). This recalls the description of the sin of the Fall, in which Adam and Eve “loved their own power (*potestatem...diligens*)” (12.9.14). The cry of this disordered love is “*mine!*” The equivalent, in terms of time, is “*now!*” Thus, Augustine demonstrates that all claims that happiness can be achieved by us in this life are false. True happiness only comes by the gift of faith in this life and is realized in the next when we love rightly and all we love is there (13.7.10).¹²⁹

To receive the gift of faith, then, and to await the realization of happiness in the next life, requires not only that we have faith in Christ who chose justice over power; it also requires the activity of the Spirit in re-ordering our loves. Or, to put this more precisely, true faith in Christ does not come apart from the Spirit. We cannot merely believe in the One who chose justice over power, but we must love that One too. At the conclusion of Book 13 Augustine stipulates that there are those who remember the essentials of the Christian faith, and think about them, but do not love Christianity as the truth; instead their remembering and thinking are to demonstrate it is false. Their relation to faith in Christ, then, does not arise from a love of God; rather, it is at the service of some love of their own truth that excludes Truth. As long as we love our own power we will convince ourselves that happiness somehow lies within our grasp, or that we do not *really* want it after all. This is a love and knowledge of happiness that integrates human personality and orders our lives; but it is a

¹²⁹ Thus, as Williams argues, *Trin.* presents the absolute necessity of recognizing ourselves as finite and temporal creatures: “We image the divine wisdom to the extent that our self-perception is a perception of our own absolute dependence on the self-giving of that wisdom...And this means that we must perceive ourselves as timebound, limited and vulnerable, as being in need of grace, not as self-generating” (“Sapientia”, p. 326).

disordered love and deluded knowledge because it excludes how the desire for happiness and its fulfilment comes only by God. Thus Augustine thrice emphasizes in *The Trinity* that “faith must work through love (*quae fides per dilectionem operatur*)” (Gal 5:6). In other words, faith apart from love of God can still be bound up with love of the world; and, so, for such people they will still refer and evaluate all of their actions in terms of the world.

The verses that Augustine pairs with Gal 5:6 depict this relation between faith and love. First, he pairs Galatians 5:6 with his key pneumatological verse, Romans 5:5: faith works through love by the gift of the Spirit (13.10.14). Second, he pairs it with Romans 1:7: “the just man lives on faith” (13.20.26). Faith working through love, then, makes us just. Third, in Book 15, he pairs it with James 2:19, showing that the demons too have faith. The demons, too, believe in the content of the Christian faith, yet it does not do them, in the words of Book 15, any “use” (15.18.32).¹³⁰ Crucially this quotation of Galatians 5:6 comes amidst Augustine’s justification for calling the Spirit ‘gift’. He argues, among other proofs, that it is because apart from the gift of love, all other gifts amount to nothing (*nisi propter dilectionem*). We see the crucial pairing of *propter* with *dilectionem*. He makes this point even more provocatively when he says that this applies even to faith. Only by the Spirit’s gift of love are we made subject to God, rather than remaining enamoured of our own power; and only when we are subject to God does our knowledge of all things conform to the order of creation, placing us in our middle place. Thus no gifts will be of any ‘use’ because apart from the Spirit’s gift of love our judgment and use of all gifts will somehow exclude their relation to God.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Similarly, in *c. s. Ar.*, Augustine says that unless the Spirit prays in us we only pray to accomplish our triad (25.21).

¹³¹ This corresponds to earlier in Book 6 when he comments on Hilary’s description of the special properties of the Trinity as “Eternity in the Father, form in the image, use in the gift.” The Spirit is use and gift precisely because by reordering our enjoyment in creation it draws all things to “keep their right order and rest in their right places” (6.11). Part of the Spirit’s doing so for human beings is restoring us to that middle place through our love of God, rather than love of the world.

We now turn from how the Spirit unites us with the incarnate Christ to how the Spirit unites us to the Son as Truth. Augustine is clear that these are not to be taken as separate moments, but belong together as essential components of God's redeeming activity. Given that we looked at this topic at length in our previous chapter, we will confine ourselves to only one text in order to bring out how the relation between the Spirit and judgment is connected to our middle position. This is developed most fully in a text we treated in our previous chapter, *The Trinity* 9. In the last chapter, we saw Augustine's analogy between our mind's conception and begetting of mental words (a process which includes judgment) and the Spirit's proceeding from Father and Son. We also argued, following other scholars, that this analogy is meant to point to the Spirit's role in ordering us by love. The very description of the mind's activity when ordered by love is meant to enact the difference the Spirit makes. In a passage we have not yet addressed, Augustine contrasts love and lust in the conception of our mental words:

This word is conceived in love of either the creature or the Creator, that is of changeable nature or unchangeable truth; which means either in covetousness or in charity. Not that the creature is not to be loved, but if that love is related to the creator it will no longer be covetousness but charity. It is only covetousness when the creature is loved on its own account. In this case it does not help you in your use of it, but corrupts you in your enjoyment of it. Now a creature can either be on a par with us or lower than us; the lower creature should be used to bring us to God, the creature on a par should be enjoyed, but in God. Just as you ought to enjoy yourself not in yourself but in him who made you, so too with the one whom you love as yourself. Let us then enjoy both ourselves and our brothers in the Lord, and from that level let us not dare to lower ourselves down even to our own, and so slacken off in a downward direction. (9.8.13)¹³²

When our representation and evaluation of a thing is out of love, then, it conforms to its reality as known and loved by God; when our word is conceived instead out of lust, then that

¹³² *Trin.* 9.7.13-8.12 (CCSL 50: 304): "Quod uerbum amore concipitur siue creaturae siue creatoris, id est aut naturae mutabilis aut incommutabilis ueritatis. Ergo aut cupiditate aut caritate, non quo non sit amanda creatura, sed si ad creatorem refertur ille amor, non iam cupiditas sed caritas erit. Tunc enim est cupiditas cum propter se amatur creatura. Tunc non utentem adiuuat sed corrumpit fruentem. Cum ergo aut par nobis aut inferior creatura sit, inferiore utendum est ad deum, pari autem fruendum sed in deo. Sicut enim te ipso non in te ipso frui debes sed in eo qui fecit te, sic etiam illo quem diligis *tamquam te ipsum*. Et nobis ergo et fratribus in domino fruamur, et inde nos nec ad nosmetipsos remittere et quasi relaxare deorsum versus audeamus."

representation and evaluation is based on some other fabricated grounds. James Wetzel has helpfully referred to Augustine's conception of sin as involving "reading a value into things...that is just not there."¹³³ Most important for our purposes is that Augustine maps his familiar distinction between use and enjoyment onto our middle position. Love of God orders our knowing in conformity with our middle position, and, therefore, we enjoy God (middle subordinated to above); we enjoy ourselves and our fellow human beings 'in' God (middle always related to above); and we use all other creatures (below related to above by middle). Ordering our relations in this way preserves us in our precarious middle position. We note as well, contrary to Augustine's early position (as we saw in our last chapter in *On True Religion*, in which we were to enjoy God alone) his mature position is that we can enjoy our fellow creatures, but only 'in' God. The value that our love recognizes and enjoys in another includes within it the recognition of her as a creature of God. And this ordered-love in Book 9 is clearly tied to the Spirit's work in us. We take up our middle place, and so are capable of judgment, by the Spirit.

We are only capable of judging well, then, from the middle place. When, in lust, we abandon our middle place, we are left to construct some other basis for judgments, and our relations to self, to others and to lower things is distorted. We saw how Augustine uses the triad of 1 John 2:16 to detail the ways lust distorts our judgment. The opposite process occurs when God acts in Son and Spirit to restore us to our middle place and rehabilitate our capacity for judgment. Having established the way the Spirit makes us capable of judgment by bringing us to the middle, both by the mediation and imitation of Christ and by uniting us to the Truth present to our minds, we are now ready to proceed to our first chapter on the "practice" of judgment, beginning with the judgment of others. This means living out our middle position, especially in terms of the challenge to attend to others as equals under God.

¹³³ James Wetzel, *Augustine: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Continuum, 2010), p.45.

Chapter Three

The Practice of Judgement I: Other-Judgment

“I will sing to you of mercy and judgment”

- Psalm 101:1

In this first “practical” chapter we will explore how Augustine understands the dangerous business of judging others. In order to do so, we will need to add to our preceding treatment of the order of creation a treatment of eschatology, examining how this age relates to God’s final judgment. To judge others well, we must take up our rightful middle place in creation, as we attend to others as equals under God, and we must live appropriately in this age situated between Christ’s first coming and before his return. The divine judgment that will consummate history on Christ’s return provides both the justification for judging others, in order to help them prepare, and for restraining or deferring our judgment until God judges. When we do take up our right place in creation and live appropriately in this age, we judge others *mercifully*. Thus in order to demonstrate how the Spirit perfects other-judgment, we will explore how the Spirit makes us merciful by re-ordering our relation to time.

I. ‘Judge not’

In this section, we will establish the essential features of judging others. We will do so by examining Augustine’s interpretations of Christ’s command in the Sermon on the Mount

to “Judge not (*Nolite iudicare*)” (Matthew 7:1). Augustine provides three distinct, but related, interpretations of this verse. In none of them does he take Christ to be commanding us to refrain entirely from judging others; instead, we are called to recognize the nature of our knowledge of others so that we may make sound judgments.

Augustine’s first interpretation of “Judge not”, in *On Eighty-Three Varied Questions*, *Question 71* (mid 390’s), turns on the love that must be present in order to know another. We can only judge a person when we know them, and “no one is known except through friendship.”¹³⁴ Anyone we do not love, then, we ought not to judge. But how exactly does loving another alter my judgment of her? Augustine suggests that apart from love we will not come to balanced knowledge of others: true friendship consists in recognizing another’s virtues and vices. Loving others is also tied to taking the time to get to know them. He provides two examples of how rushing to conclusions may prevent real friendship. First, we may initially encounter another sinning, and incorrectly assume that a particular vice encompasses her character; the result is that we may rule her out as a friend. Instead, we ought to take the time to recognize what is admirable in her character, which may be humbling to us, as it is likely that she has some virtue we lack. Or, even in the case that we take time to get to know her, and she appears to have no redeeming features, we ought to befriend her because she is beloved of God (71.6). Second, we may initially first encounter another’s virtue, and therefore assume that she is without sin. The danger lies in what may happen when we (inevitably) encounter her sinning: our naive admiration turns quickly to hatred. In both cases, rushing to judgment prevents me from maintaining a friendship. Within friendship, judging another can be a way of helping her turn from sin. While this specific interpretation of Matthew 7:1 does not arise again, the view that judgment ought to include a

¹³⁴ *div. qu.* 71.5.

balanced view of others and be done for their well-being is consistently present throughout Augustine's discussions of this topic.

His two other interpretations of "Judge not" depend on what we *cannot* know about others: first, we frequently cannot accurately discern their intentions. This interpretation appears only a year or two after the previous one, in *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount* (hereafter *Lord's Sermon*) and *On the Christian Struggle* (hereafter *Christian Struggle*),¹³⁵ and is also present in his later commentary on Psalm 118, as we discuss below. As we will consider at greater length in our next chapter, Augustine believes it is a tragic reality of this age that "every heart is shut against each other."¹³⁶ Whereas the implication of this reality for self-judgment, as we will see, is that we should focus on what others cannot see, in the case of other-judgment, our only basis for judgment is what we can see. Judging others' hearts is "God's privilege"; we may only judge on the basis of "what is out in the open."¹³⁷ And often what we see admits of various interpretations; we regularly cannot legitimately conclude what lies behind an action, and yet how many of our judgments are based on such interpretive leaps? In the later example of this interpretation of "Judge not" in his commentary on Psalm 118, Augustine emphasizes especially how Christ's words are warning us against endless suspicion about others' motives. The portion of the Sermon on the Mount that precedes "Judge not" focuses our attention on acting for God's glory, rather than acting for any kind of worldly gain, including others' approval or financial benefit. Augustine believes that Christ's "Judge not" comes as a warning that his words are not instructions for the interrogation of others' motives: "lest we suspect people whom we see live good lives, but whose purposes we do not see, of being motivated in their well-doing by some such motives as [Jesus] has

¹³⁵ *s. Dom. mon.* 2.18.59, *agon.* 27.29.

¹³⁶ *en. Ps.* 55.9.

¹³⁷ *s.* 243.5.

mentioned.”¹³⁸ Thus “Judge not” alerts us to all those actions in which the others’ intention is either unknowable or ambiguous. We are to assume that the intention is good and leave the judgment to God.¹³⁹

This is not to deny that we are without any basis for judgments. Augustine argues that Christ’s “Judge not” is later balanced in the Sermon on the Mount, when he declares “By their fruits you will know them.”¹⁴⁰ Certain actions do provide grounds for judgments about others’ intentions, because certain actions can only arise from sinful intentions.¹⁴¹ But which actions? Both those actions that cause division among the Church and ones that are clearly immoral. In his *Lord’s Sermon*, Augustine specifies that this applies to “debaucheries, blasphemies, thefts, drunkenness”;¹⁴² drunkenness is singled out elsewhere as well;¹⁴³ another such list includes “theft, or homicide, or adultery.”¹⁴⁴ Augustine is convinced that breaking with the Church may be interpreted as rejection of Christ, whatever heretics may claim to the contrary.¹⁴⁵ When one is within the Church, we ought not to question his faithfulness, whereas when he breaks from it that is a clear sign of faithlessness.¹⁴⁶ Such actions, then, that are clearly immoral, or that divide the Church, provide the basis for judgment.

The second limitation to our knowledge that determines Augustine’s third interpretation of “Judge not” is the temporary nature of what we know about others. This interpretation appears alongside the second one in *Lord’s Sermon* and *Christian Struggle* as another type of rash judgment: even when a judgment is legitimate, we must recognize that it

¹³⁸ *en. Ps.* 118-12.4 (CCSL 40: 1702): “Et cum haec omnia monuisset, quia possumus suspicari eos quos iuste uiuere uidemus, et quo fine faciant non uidemus, propter aliquid huiusmodi benefacere, continuo subiecit: Nolite iudicare, ne iudicemini.”

¹³⁹ *s. Dom. mon.* 1.18.59-60; see also *s.* 243.5.

¹⁴⁰ *s.* 2.18.59; also *civ. Dei* 16.2, *en. Ps.* 149.2, *ep.* 29.6, *Jo. ev. tr.* 46.5.

¹⁴¹ *ep.* 149.14.

¹⁴² *s. Dom. mon.* 1.18.59.

¹⁴³ *ep.* 29.6.

¹⁴⁴ *en. Ps.* 149.2.

¹⁴⁵ *ep. Jo.* 3.8.

¹⁴⁶ *en. Ps.* 149.2, *en. Ps.* 46.5.

is provisional; nothing is settled until God's final judgment.¹⁴⁷ We cannot even reasonably know what *we* will be like tomorrow, so how can we assume our judgments about others will remain accurate--if they ever were.¹⁴⁸ Augustine puts the matter concisely in *Christian Struggle*: "[Christ] admonishes us not to condemn...when we do not know how a person will turn out later on."¹⁴⁹ In *Lord's Sermon* the provisionality of our judgment is tied to offering correction to facilitate change: "...if you were to come to know the gluttony and drunkenness as being manifest, and were so to administer correction (*corrigi*) as if the person could never be amended and changed, you would nevertheless judge rashly (*temere*)."¹⁵⁰ Augustine pairs "Judge not" in his *Lord's Sermon* with 1 Corinthians 4:5 "Judge nothing before the time until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God." This verse regularly appears when Augustine is advising us to restrain ourselves from judging others.¹⁵¹ This verse contains "the highest wisdom" because it depicts how "unknown" and "unstable" the hearts of human beings are.¹⁵² So while a judgment may not be rash by legitimately basing itself on another's actions, it may still be rash if our response to the sin we have rightly judged to be present assumes the sin is permanent.

In these three interpretations of "Judge not", then, we get a clear sense of how Augustine understands other-judgment. In the first interpretation, he outlines the basis of other judgment as love, specifically love that recognizes others' virtues and vices and puts judgment at the service of their well-being; with the second and third interpretations we see him emphasize the limitations of our knowledge, as we cannot often accurately discern

¹⁴⁷ *s. Dom. mon.* 2.18.61, *agon.* 27.29.

¹⁴⁸ *ep.* 130.2.4.

¹⁴⁹ *agon.* 27.29.

¹⁵⁰ *s. Dom. mon.* 2.18.61 (CCSL 35: 157): "Item si manifestam edacitatem ebriositatemque cognoueris et ita reprehenderis, quasi numquam ille possit corrigi atque mutari, nihilo minus temere iudicabis."

¹⁵¹ See *en. Ps.* 55.9, *epp.* 95.3, 121.3.18, 130.2.4, 78.5, *s. Dom. mon.* 2.18.60, *Jo. ev. tr.* 35.9, 77.3, *en. Ps.* 44.33, 87.13, 88-1.7, 100.12, 109.15, 111.2, 118-15.7, 148.16, *s.* 47.14.23, 49.4.4, 71.13.21, 243.5.5, 259.2, 306.9.8, 351.3.4, *b. conjug.* 18.21, *civ. Dei* 22.29.6, *Trin.* 1.8.17.

¹⁵² *ep.* 130.2.4.

another's motives, and even in those cases in which we have a clear basis for judgment, our judgments are impermanent. One notable shift from the earlier interpretation (*Question*) to the later (*Lord's Sermon, Christian Struggle*) is evident in that in the later texts Augustine emphasizes the limitations of our knowledge and situates those limitations eschatologically. When we cannot justify a judgment, we must abstain from judging and defer to God's judgment; equally, when we can and do make a judgment out of love, we must recognize it as temporary and defer to God's final judgment. We now turn to the nature of God's judgment.

II. God's Judgment and Ours

In order to see how Augustine's understanding of God's judgment further defines the nature of our judgment, his exegesis of another key scriptural text will serve us well; we will here follow his interpretations of Psalm 101:1: "I will sing to you of mercy and judgment (*miseriordiam et iudicium*)."

He quotes this verse over 30 times in his corpus, ranging from his earlier works (*On Eighty-Three Varied Questions, Question 68* in mid 390's) to late (*Gift of Perseverance* in 428/429); this verse is especially present in his anti-Pelagian works and in his sermons. We will see that there are four ways that Augustine sees the inseparability of mercy and judgment in God's dealings with humanity: (1) in the two destinies of sinful humanity; (2) as ages of salvation history; (3) with the exercise of judgment in this age of mercy; (4) and in his use of mercy as the criterion of God's final judgment of Christians. Evident in each of these is his belief that God's mercy does not ignore or trivialize human sin; he seeks to show instead how God's mercy never excludes God's just judgment in dealing with sin. So, we, too, are called to be merciful, but like the divine mercy, ours ought not to exclude judgment (often Augustine will speak of being merciful as *involving* judgment); and we must prepare ourselves to be judged on the basis of whether or not we have been merciful.

(1) The first way that Augustine sees mercy and judgment related in God concerns salvation and damnation. The relation of divine mercy and judgment in this case lies in his dual response to the identical situation of humanity: God could have saved all or damned all. The fact that God saves some and damns others shows that God is *both* merciful and just.¹⁵³ The operation of mercy and judgement in this case raises the question of arbitrariness in God's will. Augustine's responses to this question are varied. On the one hand, he affirms that it is "a profound mystery, impenetrable by human thought" to be believed on the authority of scripture;¹⁵⁴ we await full understanding in the next life when we will see with "the clearest light of wisdom."¹⁵⁵ On the other hand, he defends in principle that God is justified in saving some and damning others. In one of his lengthiest provisions of this defense he writes:¹⁵⁶

If this lump [of fallen humanity] were so positioned in the middle that, as it merited nothing good, it merited nothing bad, it would seem with good reason to be an injustice that vessels were made from it for dishonor. But since the whole lump fell into condemnation because of the one sin through the free choice of the first human being, the fact that vessels are made from it for honor is not due to his righteousness, because norighteousness preceded grace, but to the mercy of God. The fact, however, that a vessel is made for dishonor is not to be attributed to the injustice of God--heaven forbid that there should be any injustice in God--but to his judgment (*iudicio*). Whoever holds this along with the Catholic Church does not argue against grace in favor of merits but sings to the Lord of his mercy and judgment so that he does not ungratefully reject his mercy or unjustly accuse his judgment.¹⁵⁷

The relation between mercy and judgment here is undoubtedly the most controversial of the four we will consider and has been harshly criticized. Augustine faced one such critic himself

¹⁵³ *div. qu.* 68.5, *ep.* 186.6.18, *ench.* 94, 95, *pecc. mer.* 2.18.31, *nupt. et conc.* 2.3.8, *gr. et lib. arb.* 22.44, *persev.* 1.11.27, 1.14.35, *c. Jul.* 4.8.46, *cura mort.* 13.16, *c. Faust.* 21.3.

¹⁵⁴ *c. Faust.* 21.3.

¹⁵⁵ See *ench.* 95; *div. qu.* 95.

¹⁵⁶ see also *div. qu.* 68.6, *ench.* 94, *pecc. mer.* 2.18.31.

¹⁵⁷ *ep.* 186.6.18 (PL 33): "Haec massa si esset ita media, ut quemadmodum nihil boni ita nec mali aliquid mereretur, non frustra videretur iniquitas, ut ex ea fierent vasa in contumeliam: cum vero per liberum arbitrium primi hominis in condemnationem ex uno universa defluerit, procul dubio quod ex ea fiunt vasa in honorem, non ipsius iustitiae, quae gratiam nulla praecessit, sed Dei misericordiae; quod vero in contumeliam, non iniquitati Dei, quae absit ut sit apud Deum, sed iudicio deputandum est. Hoc quisquis cum Ecclesia catholica sapit, non contra gratiam pro meritis disputat, sed misericordiam et iudicium Domino cantat, ut nec misericordiam recuset ingratus, nec iudicium accuset iniustus."

in Julian who, as one contemporary admirer of Julian has put it, believed that for God to be truly just he “would not show favoritism, extending favour (grace) beyond their (alleged) merits to some but not all of those he judges.”¹⁵⁸ We need not make a declaration on this matter; most relevant for us is how, even in this difficult example, Augustine wants to see judgment and mercy as inseparable in God’s dealings with humanity. He defends the justice of God’s judgment, even as it remains inscrutable, because our own judgments must take their lead from the nature of God’s divine judgment. To “sing of God’s mercy and judgment” in this case, then, involves believing the hard truth of God’s differing responses to universal human sinfulness.

(2) The second way that Augustine relates divine mercy and judgment is as distinct ages of salvation history: the age of mercy was inaugurated with the coming of Christ; and the age of judgment comes when he returns to consummate history. The logic of the relation between mercy and judgment as ages parallels the logic above, as the two ages are inseparable moments in God’s providential reign over history. Although they can be distinguished, God’s purposes are only realized in their relation.

How does Christ inaugurate the age of mercy? Christ’s Incarnation itself is, of course, an astounding act of mercy. Augustine writes that whereas we were born in time and by our sin have become enslaved to the temporal, the Son was eternal but out of mercy took on flesh and entered time to rescue us.¹⁵⁹ What gives the age its name is that Christ deferred making judgments since, had he not done so, we all would be damned; instead, he first came to “bring the world into a state of salvation.”¹⁶⁰ Thus Augustine also refers to this as the age of God’s patience.¹⁶¹ By calling all to repentance and preaching the forgiveness of sins Christ “came to pay out mercy in advance, so that later on he might pass judgment....He granted them

¹⁵⁸ Rist, p. 150.

¹⁵⁹ *ep. Jo.* 2.10.

¹⁶⁰ *Jo. ev. tr.* 54.5.

¹⁶¹ *en. Ps.* 80.19, 102.16, *ep.* 264.1, s. 71.17.20.

forgiveness of sins; he made them into good trees. He deferred the axe, he provided the security.”¹⁶² Christ’s choosing of mercy over judgment for our sake went to the utmost extreme. Not only did God take on flesh in Christ and then defer his final judgment for our salvation, but Christ even subjected himself to be unjustly judged by human beings: “He who came for this cause judged no man: He suffered also the wicked. He suffered unjust judgment, that He might execute righteous judgment. But it was of his mercy that He endured unjust judgment. In short, He became so low as to come to the cross; yes, he laid aside His power, but published His mercy”. Thus the most radical publication of his mercy is that while on the cross he requested God’s forgiveness for his persecutors.¹⁶³ We see that in each case, Christ is merciful so that he might eventually judge: he is merciful to us so some sinners may be prepared for judgment; he mercifully endures unjust judgment so that he might eventually execute just judgment.

(3) The age of mercy prepares us for the age of judgment, and also *includes* judgement itself, albeit not final judgment. We see this in two ways:

(i) First, God defers his *final* judgment in the age of mercy, but he is still active in judging. Augustine’s clearest statement of the nature of these judgments is in Book 20 of *City*. He distinguishes between God’s final judgment, and God’s “first” and “intervening” judgments. The “first” judgment refers to God’s punishment of Adam and Eve for their disobedience in the garden and Satan for his angelic rebellion. His “intervening” judgments include all of his ongoing acts to punish human wrong-doing, including both our inheritance of original sin and the particular suffering allotted for individual sins. Such judgments are secret, though their consequences may be visible, while at the final judgment God will reveal, with staggering clarity, the reasons some will dwell in heaven and others are consigned to

¹⁶² s. 72.1.2.

¹⁶³ *Jo. ev. tr.* 36.4.

hell (20.1). Thus Augustine distinguishes between God's secret judgments now, which include "the chastisement by which even now we are either put through our paces with a view to our purification, or cautioned with a view to our conversion, or, if we scorn God's invitation and instruction, blinded and eventually commended", and his "open judgment" at the second coming of Christ.¹⁶⁴ In discussing the age of mercy, Augustine focuses especially on God's judgments of Christians in which suffering serves some remedial purpose.¹⁶⁵

(ii) Second, and most relevant for our purposes, within the age of mercy we are called to *prepare ourselves* for the age of judgment. In Augustine's sermons, he often stresses to his congregations that the age of God's mercy is not a time to use assurance of God's forgiveness to justify spiritual complacency. He often contrasts two 'extreme' positions: those of us who wallow in sin, trusting that God will forgive and believing that God is merciful without being just; and others who are so arrogantly (and deludedly) confident that their righteousness suffices, that they want God to exact vengeance on other sinners, believing that God is just without being merciful.¹⁶⁶ The nature of this age of mercy, though, demands we ready ourselves for the execution of God's justice: "You are focusing on his mercy and leaving no room for fear of his judgment. If you want to sing to him of his mercy and judgment, be clear about this: he forgives in order that you may be corrected (*corrigaris*), not that you may have license to continue in your villainy."¹⁶⁷ To fail to repent is to make "bad use" of God's

¹⁶⁴ *en. Ps.* 9.1.

¹⁶⁵ *en. Ps.* 118-29.6. Augustine's key verse on such "intervening judgments" is 1 Peter 4:17: "It is now time for judgment to take place, beginning from the house of the Lord." He turns to this verse especially when commenting on the Psalms (see *en. Ps.* 9.1, 59.6, 70-2.10, 93.23, 118-16.5, 118-31.4, 118-32.6, 147.27; for other references see *ep.* 164.7.21). Another verse he also uses in this context, though less frequently, is 1 Corinthians 11:31-32: "For, if we judged ourselves, we would, of course, not be judged by the Lord. But since we are judged by the Lord, we are rebuked so that we may not be condemned with this world" (see *ep.* 111.5, s. 148.1, *en. Ps.* 118-29.6). Augustine also quotes only verse 31 ("For, if we judged ourselves, we would, of course, not be judged by the Lord") to demonstrate how by self-judgment and repentance God forgives us and so we escape his judgment for those sins; see *ep.* 209.10, s. 351.4.7.

¹⁶⁶ s. 60.5; see also *en. Ps.* 74.5, 77.22.

¹⁶⁷ *en. Ps.* 100.3 (CCSL 39: 1407): "Adtendis ad misericordiam, et non times iudicium. Si uis cantare misericordiam et iudicium, intellege quia ideo parcit, ut corrigaris, non ut in malignitate permanes."

patience.¹⁶⁸ The age of mercy is a “space” or “room” God gives us to recognize our sins, to repent of them, and to attempt to correct them.¹⁶⁹ In this age of mercy, then, Augustine advises: “Practice [judgment and mercy] yourself, since God does.”¹⁷⁰

Practicing judgment and mercy includes, then, judging both ourselves and others. God’s final judgment need not come as a complete surprise; if it does, we will regret it. Augustine writes of the final judgment (assuming, for rhetorical purposes, the voice of God): “I take you from behind your back, and put you down in front of your eyes. You will see yourself, and bewail yourself.”¹⁷¹ We can, then, begin to put ourselves “in front of [our] eyes” by judgment. However, we are often pathologically opposed to doing so; judging others becomes an excuse for “forgetting” about ourselves. When we judge others in that way we do not do so out of love and so it rarely accomplishes its purpose, which is to facilitate others’ healing.¹⁷² In contrast, Augustine believes that Jesus’ parables often point to the need for self-judgment and repentance. In the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, the tax collector earned Jesus’ approval because he came before God confessing his sins and requesting God’s mercy.¹⁷³ And the foolish virgins squandered the age of mercy by concerning themselves with others’ opinions of them and taking no account of God; whereas the wise virgins engage in self-judgment and repent of their sins in this age, and so are prepared to meet the groom when he comes: “Now is the time for mercy; repent. Have you a chance to do that at the time of judgment?”¹⁷⁴ There is judgment in this age of mercy, then, when we judge ourselves and others in order to further our conversion. When we judge ourselves now, and turn to Christ for forgiveness, we then ready ourselves for when he will

¹⁶⁸ *ep.* 264.1.

¹⁶⁹ *s.* 17.5.5.

¹⁷⁰ *en. Ps.* 32-2.11.

¹⁷¹ *s.* 17.5.5.

¹⁷² *en. Ps.* 100.3.

¹⁷³ *en. Ps.* 74.10.

¹⁷⁴ *s.* 93.10.16.

come as judge “because we have sent him ahead as our advocate, we can hope without qualm for his coming back as judge.”¹⁷⁵ This relation between mercy and judgment is essential for us, for it shows how we are called to judge both ourselves and others in order to prepare for God’s final judgment.

(4) Fourth, and finally, God’s judgment of Christians does not exclude mercy; instead, the basis for God’s judgment is whether or not we have been merciful: “there is mercy in God when he judges and judgment in God when he shows mercy.”¹⁷⁶ Even when God is merciful, then, God still judges based on how merciful we have been to others. Thus we see that the judgment we are to exercise in this age ought itself to be merciful as it is another essential way of preparing us for God’s judgment. This interpretation of the relation between divine mercy and judgment involves the interpretation of two key New Testament texts:

(i) James 2:12-13: “...he shall have judgment without mercy on him that has showed no mercy; and mercy rejoices against judgment. Merciless judgment will be passed on anyone who has not shown mercy” (James 2:12-13). These verses define for Augustine how mercy is the *criterion* of God’s judgment.¹⁷⁷ The “exaltation” of mercy over judgment specifies that mercy is the basis for judgment: “It means that mercy is given a higher place, that it takes precedence. If some act of mercy is found in a person who also has, perhaps, some sin that deserves to be punished at the judgment, the fire of sin is extinguished by the flood of mercy.”¹⁷⁸ Yet this does not oppose mercy and judgment to one another; rather, God’s mercy includes judgment based on who has been merciful and, therefore, divine mercy “will itself be just.”¹⁷⁹ Augustine cites this verse when, after Monica’s death, he prays for her

¹⁷⁵ s. 213.6.

¹⁷⁶ ep. 167.6.19.

¹⁷⁷ Jesus’ saying that “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” serves the same function; for examples where it is paired with James 2 see en. Ps. 32-2.11, ep. 167.6.19 and without s. 347.3.3 and s. Dom. mon. 1.4.11.

¹⁷⁸ en. Ps. 143.8 (CCSL 40: 2079): “Superponitur misericordia iudicio; in quo inuentum fuerit opus misericordiae, etsi habuerit aliquid forte in iudicio quo puniatur, tamquam unda misericordiae peccati ignis exstinguitur.”

¹⁷⁹ en. Ps. 32-2.11; see also en. Ps. 111.4.

salvation and reminds God that she was merciful.¹⁸⁰ Conversely, in the parable of the rich man, Jesus teaches that the rich man was “refused mercy, because he himself had refused it.”¹⁸¹ If God’s judgment were not based on mercy “what hope would we have?”¹⁸²

We ought to be merciful because we recognize that our self-judgment is not comprehensive enough to ensure that we repent of all the sins we have committed; by mercy, we receive forgiveness for the sins we, in our ignorance or forgetfulness, did not request forgiveness for.¹⁸³ Alternately we ought to be merciful when we do recognize we have sinned and repent of our particular failures;¹⁸⁴ apart from receiving mercy for being merciful, God’s judgment would “find matter for condemnation in everyone.”¹⁸⁵ This promise can give us hope, for our daily sins need not lead us to despair of ever attaining salvation, instead, we are told: “Do not fear, do not despair...simply be kind, be merciful and lend.”¹⁸⁶ Let “your heart overflow with mercy”!¹⁸⁷

(ii) Lk 6:37-38: “Forgive and you will be forgiven; give and it will be given to you...for the measure you give will be the measure you get back” (Lk 6:37-38).¹⁸⁸ Augustine interprets these verses as definitions of the two “*works of mercy*”¹⁸⁹ or “two kinds of alms”¹⁹⁰--giving and forgiving--by which Christians receive forgiveness for their daily sins: “The terms have been stated, the rule fixed.”¹⁹¹ Forgiving others’ sins is a work of mercy available to all, regardless of their financial means. Augustine refers to such acts of

¹⁸⁰ *conf.* 9.13.35.

¹⁸¹ *s.* 41.4.

¹⁸² *perf. just.* 15.34.

¹⁸³ *ep.* 140.31.75.

¹⁸⁴ *pecc. mer.* 2.3.3.

¹⁸⁵ *en. Ps.* 147.12.

¹⁸⁶ *en. Ps.* 111.4.

¹⁸⁷ *en. Ps.* 78.11.

¹⁸⁸ His use of Matthew 7:2b (“the measure you give will be the measure you get”) follows this same pattern; see *en. Ps.* 32-2.11, 143.8, *s.* 367.2.2.

¹⁸⁹ *ep.* 157.2.10.

¹⁹⁰ *s.* 42.1.

¹⁹¹ *s.* 114.5.

forgiveness as the “terms”,¹⁹² “condition”,¹⁹³ “rule”,¹⁹⁴ “bargain”,¹⁹⁵ even the “instrument, read out in court” of our forgiveness.¹⁹⁶ Indeed, this “term” is mentioned in the same breath as the commandments as part of the basis of Christian living.¹⁹⁷ Forgiveness is that work of mercy which Augustine believes all Christians, regardless of their means, ought to practice. He sees it as central to Christ’s teaching, including being embedded in the Lord’s Prayer, which we are to pray daily. That daily prayer to God commits us to be merciful to others as the basis of our being forgiven.¹⁹⁸ Thus Augustine instructs his congregation: “You want forgiveness when you seek it; forgive anyone who seeks it from you. These prayers were dictated by the heavenly law officer himself.”¹⁹⁹ We see, then, that in preparation for God’s judgment, we are to judge ourselves and others when we sin, but equally in preparation we must also forgive those sins.

In a passage commenting on Psalm 32, Augustine briefly outlines his understanding of God’s final judgment, with reference to all the key biblical texts that inform his view; this central passage is worth quoting at length:

[God] will find room for mercy too, for he will deal gently with those at least to whom he can say, ‘I was hungry, and you fed me’ (Mt 25:35). We know it, because in one of the apostolic letters we are told, ‘Merciless judgment will be passed on anyone who has not shown mercy’ (James 2:13); and the Lord says, ‘Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy’ (Mt 5:7). Even in his judgment, then, there will be mercy as well, yet not at the expense of judgment. Mercy will be shown, if not to all and sundry, at least to anyone who has first shown mercy, and the mercy shown to such a person will itself be just, because discriminating. It is certainly a mercy that our sins are forgiven, and a mercy that we should be granted eternal life; but notice the judgment that enters into it: ‘Forgive and you will be forgiven; give and gifts will be given to you (Lk 6:37-38). Unquestionably the promise that ‘gifts will be given to you’ and ‘you will be forgiven’ is a mark of mercy; but if there were no place in it for

¹⁹² *en. Ps.* 143.8, s. 114.5.

¹⁹³ *en. Ps.* 143.7.

¹⁹⁴ *s.* 83.2.2.

¹⁹⁵ *s.* 114.5.

¹⁹⁶ *s.* 114.5.

¹⁹⁷ *ep.* 157.4.25.

¹⁹⁸ *en. Ps.* 143.7.

¹⁹⁹ *s.* 114.5.

judgment, the Lord would not have said, ‘The same measure that you measure out will be measured in turn to you.’ (Mt 7:2)²⁰⁰

God prepares the Christian for judgment, then, by making them merciful; this is God’s mercy at work, anticipating God’s judgment. As Augustine writes, if by God’s mercy we “do deeds of justice” we will come “without anxiety to his judgment.”²⁰¹ The activities of God’s mercy and judgment, need to be held together as part of his providential work: “God first relieves sinners of the punishment due to them, acting according to his mercy; and then when they are righteous he gives them life in accordance with his judgment.”²⁰²

What is most crucial for us is are the consequences these four ways have for how Christians understand the role and exercise of judgment in this age. We see that in this age of mercy, we are to prepare ourselves and others to encounter God’s final judgment; we can do so by exercising self-judgment and other-judgment for the purposes of repentance and correction. As well, because God’s judgment turns on mercy, we prepare ourselves for the final judgment by being merciful. Thus, in short, we are called to merciful judgment. Before looking more closely at the nature of mercy in order to develop Augustine’s account of merciful judgment, we will devote the next section to the role of the Spirit in re-ordering our relation to time.

III. The Spirit and Time

How does the Spirit’s work make us merciful judges? Augustine argues consistently from his early works onwards on that we are not capable of doing any good apart from the

²⁰⁰ *en. Ps.* 32-2.11 (CCSL 38: 256): “Rursus in illo iudicio habebit et misericordiam, in eos utique quibus dicturus est: Esuriui, et dedistis mihi manducare. Etenim dicitur in quadam epistola apostolica: Iudicium enim sine misericordia illi qui non fecit misericordiam. Beati, inquit, misericordes, quoniam ipsorum miserebitur. Ergo in illo iudicio erit et misericordia, sed non sine iudicio. Si enim non in quemlibet, sed in eum erit misericordia, qui praerogauit misericordiam, et ipsa misericordia iusta erit, quia confusa non erit. Misericordia est certe ut dimittantur peccata, misericordia est ut tribuatur uita aeterna; uide ibi iudicium: Dimittite, et dimittetur uobis; date, et dabitur uobis. Certe, dabitur uobis, et dimittetur uobis, misericordia est. Si inde recessisset iudicium, non diceret: In qua mensura mensi fueritis, in ea remetietur vobis.”

²⁰¹ *en. Ps.* 150.30.

²⁰² *en. Ps.* 118-29.6.

Spirit at work in us.²⁰³ In his mature works, Augustine explores with more specificity how the Spirit's work makes us merciful. In *The Trinity* 15 Augustine suggests that we become merciful when the Spirit, who is the love shared eternally between Father and Son, is given to us; that eternal Love given to us *in* time, then, re-orders our relation *to* time. We will develop this brief suggestion in *The Trinity* 15 with reference to other works of that period. Love re-orders our relation to time not only by making us merciful, but also patient and hopeful. These are all qualities that, as we have seen above, are necessary to judging others.²⁰⁴

Augustine suggests in *The Trinity* 15 that the Spirit's special title and role as Love is based on the same logic as that of the Spirit as mercy, patience and hope. In the final book of *The Trinity*, Augustine seeks to demonstrate on Scriptural grounds that the Spirit's specific titles include "Love" and "Gift." The central verse for "Love" is 1 John 4:8, 16: "God is charity." Augustine faces two challenges in demonstrating that this verse refers to the Spirit. First, he must explain why we ought not interpret it simply as a reference to the divine substance as love, rather than to a specific person within the divine life; and, if he can meet that challenge, he must then explain why it refers to the Spirit specifically. It is in meeting the first challenge that Augustine refers to mercy, patience and hope as titles for God. He argues, in a move with which we are now familiar, that Scripture often attributes some quality to God that actually describes God's work in us; in this case, Augustine cites verses from the Psalms that address God in terms of some quality. Two verses from the Psalms on patience make the case clearly: in Psalm 71:5, the Psalmist addresses God as "my patience" while in Psalm

²⁰³ For an especially clear example of this see *Simpl.* 1.2.9, 1.2.21.

²⁰⁴ Our argument in this section is in disagreement with Brian Brock's criticism of Augustine in *Christian Ethics in a Technological Age* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010). Brock draws heavily on Augustine's theology to criticize dominant contemporary approaches to technology, but he then suggests that Augustine is less helpful in outlining the shape of Christian obedience, and so he turns instead to Karl Barth. Brock criticizes Augustine because he "has not indicated in any detail how the Spirit might introduce present human action into the forms of eternal life, the kingdom of heaven"; for Augustine to have done so he would have needed "a more developed Trinitarian pneumatology" (212). Whether the relation between pneumatology and time we show in this section would have been useful for Brock's project is not clear. Nonetheless we will demonstrate that the mature Augustine certainly did consider "how the Spirit might introduce present human action into the forms of eternal life."

62:5, he identifies God as the *source* of his patience. Thus we ought to conclude that the Psalmist addresses God as patience *because* God makes the Psalmist patient. Augustine then lists two other similar addresses in the Psalms: “Lord my hope” (Psalm 71:5) and “My God my mercy” (Psalm 59:17). At this point he has yet to demonstrate that these titles refer to the Spirit, but he has demonstrated that Scripture does not always refer to God’s substance when it attributes qualities to God; it may be describing the results of God’s work in us.²⁰⁵

Augustine then proceeds to show that the Spirit deserves the title “Love” because it is uniquely its work to make us loving. The argument turns on exegesis of the 4th chapter of the first Epistle of St. John. In verse 7, John affirms that God is love and that love is from God. Having demonstrated that this does not necessarily refer to God’s substance, Augustine then goes in search of clues as to whether it refers to one divine person in particular. The key word occurs when the epistle follows the affirmation that ‘God is love’ with the further specification that love is also ‘from’ God. He interprets this as a reference either to the begetting of the Son or to the procession of the Spirit. Verses 13 and 16 resolve this question of whether love is the Son or Spirit, because Augustine sees them implicitly equating love and Spirit: verse 13 says God abides in us and we in him by the Spirit, and verse 16 says that, by love, God abides in us and we in him. Augustine concludes: “So it is God the Holy Spirit proceeding from God (*procedit ex Deo*) who fires man to the love of God and neighbour when he has been given to him, and he himself is love (*dilectio*). Man has no capacity to love

²⁰⁵ *Trin.* 15.17.27 (CCSL 50: 502): “Non itaque dixit scriptura: ‘Spiritus Sanctus caritas est,’ quod si dixisset, non paruum partem quaestionis istius abstulisset, sed dixit: Deus caritas est, ut incertum sit, et ideo requirendum utrum deus pater sit caritas, an deus filius, an deus spiritus sanctus, an deus ipsa trinitas. Neque enim dicturi sumus non propterea deum dictam esse caritatem quod ipsa caritas sit ulla substantia quae dei digna sit nomine, sed quod donum sit dei sicut dictum est deo: Quoniam tu es patientia mea. Non utique propterea dictum est quia dei substantia est nostra patientia, sed quod ab ipso nobis est, sicut alibi legitur: Quoniam ab ipso est patientia mea. Hunc quippe sensum facile refellit scripturarum ipsa locutio. Tale est enim tu es patientia mea quale est: domine, spes mea et deus meus misericordia mea et multa similia. Non est autem dictum ‘domine, caritas mea’; aut: ‘tu es caritas mea’ aut ‘deus, caritas mea,’ sed ita dictum est: Deus caritas est sicut dictum est: Deus Spiritus est. Hoc qui non discernit intellectum a domino, non expositionem quaerat a nobis: non enim apertius quidquam possumus dicere.”

God except from God” (15.17.31).²⁰⁶ The Holy Spirit is called love, then, because it is particularly his work to make us love God and neighbour; just as the Son is called wisdom due to his particular role in making us wise.

While Augustine does not explicitly argue it here, using “Love” as a specific title and role of the Spirit does not contradict his claim that the divine substance is love. The Spirit is love precisely because of the Father’s begetting of the Son and the Son’s cleaving to the Father. Thus while the Spirit may be called love because he makes human beings love, this very work of the Spirit itself actually implicitly involves Father and Son. As Augustine writes, “[The Father] so begot [the Son] that their common gift would proceed from [the Son] too, and the Holy Spirit would be the Spirit of them both” (15.5.29). To characterize the Spirit as love is not to deny that Father and Son are also love, nor is it to separate the Spirit’s work from that of Father and Son; rather, it is to emphasize the Spirit’s particular personhood as the communion of Father and Son, and to further affirm that it is the gift of this communion to human beings which enables them to love God and one another. The Spirit, then, is gift because it is love, and love because it is gift; love as the communion of Father and Son, and gift as the means by which human beings themselves are drawn into communion with God and one another. Especially relevant for our purposes is that the Spirit is the love eternally shared between Father and Son, which is then turned outward and shared with us *in time*, and so makes us capable of rightly-ordered love.

After establishing that the Spirit deserves the title ‘Love’, Augustine does not then return to patience, hope and mercy to clarify whether they, too, are appropriate titles for, and effects of, the Spirit. Certainly it would not be an unjustified conclusion to draw, based on *The Trinity 15* alone, that these may all be used of the Spirit because they are all results of

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.* 15.17.31 (CCSL 50: 506): “Deus igitur spiritus sanctus qui procedit ex deo cum datus fuerit homini accendit eum in dilectionem dei et proximi et ipse dilectio est. Non enim habet homo unde deum diligat nisi ex deo.”

God's love in us. Explicit justification for associating the Spirit with making us patient, hopeful and merciful is present elsewhere. Notably his focus on these qualities as *titles* for God, and not simply features of ordered love, is a later development that indicate that Augustine was exploring the significance of Scripture's use of titles for establishing the nature and role of the divine persons.

There is a clear parallel between Augustine's two quotations from the Psalms in *The Trinity* 15 (Psalm 71:5, Psalm 62:5) and his late treatise *On Patience* (417/418); in that treatise, he argues explicitly that we are only truly patient when we have a good will that is given us by the Spirit's love.²⁰⁷ He defines patience as "that by which we tolerate evil things with an even mind that we may not with a mind uneven desert good things, through which we may arrive at better" (2). Augustine notes that human beings are capable of enduring great suffering for the sake of some good, but that endurance alone, however impressive, is not the mark of true patience; instead, we must ask what good motivates such toleration of evils (3-5).²⁰⁸ As is typical of Augustine's analysis of virtue, he argues that patience is only *true* patience when it is ordered by love of God. The connection with *The Trinity* 15 comes with the Psalms he quotes. He first quotes our two Psalms when arguing that true patience comes from God (12); he then quotes the same two Psalms again after he argues that true patience comes specifically from "the love of God which 'endures all things' (1 Cor. 13:7) and which is not shed abroad in our hearts but by the Holy Spirit given unto us (Rom. 5:5)" (22). Thus we see clearly that Augustine connects Love as a title for the Spirit with the Spirit's role in making us patient. The Spirit's Love, then, makes possible a certain relation to time in which we endure present evils for the sake of lasting goods.

²⁰⁷ Notably the explicit relation between the Spirit and patience seems to be a late development, occurring only in *pat.* and *Trin.* Elsewhere Augustine does say that our ability to recognize that patience is a gift from God is a result of the Spirit's work (see *nat. et. gr.* 23.35, s. 283.1). Most often he discusses patience in his sermons on the martyrs, without reference to the Spirit (see s. 271.1, 284.3, 313.2.2, 333.1.1; *en. Ps.* 118-23.3).

²⁰⁸ Similarly, in a sermon on patience, he helpfully compares continence as being ordered by love of God in our relation to pleasure to patience as being ordered by love of God in relation to pain (s. 283.1).

Notably, I have found no other place in Augustine's corpus in which he explicitly uses the title "My hope" for the Spirit. Yet the connection between the Spirit and hope is the earliest and most frequent description in Augustine's works of how the Spirit re-orders our relation to time. This role turns on the Spirit's role as 'pledge' (*pignus*). Pledge is referred to as early as *Soliloquies*. Augustine's key verses in this case are 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 ("But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us, by putting his seal on us and giving us his Spirit in our hearts as a pledge") and 2 Corinthians 5:5 ("He who has prepared us for [heaven] is God, who has given us the Spirit as a pledge"). The reality of the Spirit at work in us in the midst of the temptations and travails of this life assures us that we belong to God and is the grounds of our hope that we will dwell eternally with God and the saints. As Augustine puts it beautifully in *Confessions* 13: "By [the Spirit] we have received, even on our pilgrim way, the pledge that we are children of the light already. Saved only in hope we may be, but we are at home in the light and in the day. No longer are we children of the night or of darkness..."²⁰⁹ Augustine sees great significance in the term pledge, and argues in two sermons that the Spirit might more accurately be called an earnest (*arrha*). Whereas the common sense of pledge indicates that it is given and then taken back when the promise is fulfilled, an earnest is "given as part of the thing which is being promised; so when the whole thing is handed over, what has already been given is completed, not exchanged."²¹⁰ In other words, the Spirit has already been given to us, and will be given in full in the life to come. The effects of this pledge all involve establishing and maintaining us on our pilgrimage to eternal life. The most predominant effect of the pledge is to gradually wean us from our desire for earthly things to fill us instead with the "unutterable groanings of holy desire" for God;²¹¹ it is as we grow in love of God that the Spirit leads us, as the Gospel of

²⁰⁹ *conf.* 13.14.15.

²¹⁰ *s.* 156.15.16; see also *s.* 378.1.

²¹¹ *s.* 210.5.7; see also *ep.* 148.3.12, *ep.* 155.16.30, *s.* 170.10.10; *div. qu.* 61.7.

John has it, “into all truth” (John 16:13).²¹² Augustine also includes as effects of the pledge our ability to interpret Scripture,²¹³ endure suffering,²¹⁴ wait patiently for Christ’s return,²¹⁵ overcome temptation²¹⁶ and receive forgiveness of sins in the Church.²¹⁷

This brings us to mercy. The specific address “My God, my mercy” does occur prior to *The Trinity* but in all but one case, it does not refer specifically to the Spirit. Augustine uses it repeatedly, for example, in *Confessions*, but seemingly as an address for God, not the Spirit in particular.²¹⁸ In a commentary on a Psalm he does explain the address “My God, my mercy” in a way similar to his explanation in *The Trinity*: “If you call God ‘my salvation,’ I understand that you do so because he grants salvation; if you call him ‘my refuge,’ I understand that you mean you run to him for refuge; if you call him ‘my strength,’ I understand that you do so because he gives you strength. But why do you call him, ‘my mercy’? All that I am, absolutely everything that I am, comes from your mercy.”²¹⁹ Yet, while the logic of this explanation no doubt includes the Spirit, no explicit reference to the Spirit is made.

The only other instance in which Augustine interprets the address “My God, my mercy” pneumatologically is in a remarkable commentary on Psalm 143²²⁰ in which he clearly states that the Spirit makes us merciful, and, further, that mercy is a particular way of living in time: God makes us merciful as a means of supporting us in our struggle against sin and preparing us for the final judgment. Because of the Psalm’s title (“For David himself, when he went forth against Goliath”), Augustine interprets the Psalm in terms of a battle

²¹² *Jo. ev. tr.* 96.4, 97.1, *en. Ps.* 118-6.1.

²¹³ *div. qu.* 59.4.

²¹⁴ *en. Ps.* 36.2-9.

²¹⁵ *en. Ps.* 90-2.13.

²¹⁶ *ep.* 177.4.

²¹⁷ *ench.* 65.

²¹⁸ *conf.* 3.1.1, 3.3.5, 9.9.21, 12.16.23, 13.1.1.

²¹⁹ *en. Ps.* 58-2.11 (CCSL 39: 753): “Si dicas: Salus mea, intellego quia dat salutem; si dicas: Refugium meum, intellego quia confugis ad eum; si dicas: Fortitudo mea, intellego quia dat tibi fortitudinem: Misericordia mea, quid est? Totum quidquid sum, de misericordia tua est.”

²²⁰ *en. Ps.* 143.

between David, read as Christ and his Church, and Goliath, all those who are hostile to Christ. He outlines the battle on both a macro-level, in terms of the Church and its enemies, and a micro-level, with respect to the individual and his enemies. The Church's enemies are primarily the devil and his angels who use unbelievers against the Church. The Church advances in battle--cuts off Goliath's head--when unbelievers become Christians (143.4). For the individual, the devil and angels are only able to tempt him because he remains enslaved to lust. This is what Paul means in Galatians 5:17 in describing how the "flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." The enemy, then, is within us, in our fallen desires (143.5). Augustine then states that the battle could not be endured, let alone won, apart from divine help, and that the helper is the Holy Spirit. He had defined the battle by citing Galatians 5:17, and then he identifies the helper with reference to Galatians 5:18: "If you are led by the Spirit, you are no longer under the law." To be under the law, Augustine writes, is to be weighed down by it as David was by his armour. Instead, we turn to the Spirit: "If you are led by the Spirit, realize who it is who will help you to accomplish what you want to do: it is your helper, your supporter, your hope, the one who trains your hands for battle and your fingers for war" (143.6). Augustine specifies three different states of participation in the battle: (1) those who are *defeated* act according to their lust; (2) those who are still *fighting* experience the lust but have not yet decided whether to act on it or not; (3) and those who have attained *victory* experience the lust but have decided not to act on it. Yet it remains the case that all victories in this life are temporary, for our fallen nature remains, and so we still experience temptation (143.6).

It is after having described this internal battle that Augustine moves on to the Psalmist's address to God: "My mercy, don't let me be overcome." Augustine first questions whether referring to God as "My mercy" identifies God as one who is merciful towards him *or* as the source of his own mercy as it is shown to others. He concludes that it is the latter, on

the grounds that being merciful is one means by which God sustains us in our battle with sin:

“There is nothing that so surely trounces the enemy than our acting mercifully towards others.” The enemy in this case is the devil who, when he succeeds in tempting us to commit sin, can be prevented from taking firm hold if we confess our sin and do works of mercy.

After quoting Luke 6:37-38 as the biblical basis for works of mercy, Augustine writes:

What is it that God forgives? What does he give? What else but charity? And how does he give us charity if not through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us? If, then, our enemy is defeated by our works of mercy, and if we could not perform works of mercy without having charity, and if there would be no charity in us unless we received it through the Holy Spirit, we can be sure that the Lord is training our hands for battle and our fingers for war. We rightly call him, ‘My mercy’ for it is only by his gift to us that we can be merciful. (143.7)²²¹

We are merciful as a result of the Spirit’s love. Further, works of mercy not only give us the possibility of forgiveness for the daily sins we commit in the midst of the battle, they also ensure that when we meet God at the final judgment, he will be merciful towards us. As Augustine states here, and as we considered at greater length above, Scripture teaches that God judges us on whether or not we have been merciful: “If some act of mercy is found in a person who also has, perhaps, some sin that deserves to be punished at the judgment, the fire of sin is extinguished by the flood of mercy” (143.8).

Augustine’s interpretations of patience, hope and mercy, then, all turn on the Spirit re-ordering our relation to time; because of this, they are often inseparable from one another. In passages in which Augustine focuses on only one of them, another of them often pops up as well. For example, as we have seen, with the hope for eternal life given us by the Spirit comes patience, by which we can endure suffering. Similarly, it is by the promise of God’s forgiveness for our daily sins in response to our works of mercy that we remain hopeful for

²²¹ *en. Ps.* 143.7 (CCSL 40: 2078): “Et quae dimittit? quae dat? Nonne caritas? Et unde caritas nisi per Spiritum sanctum qui datus est nobis? Si ergo per opera misericordiae noster vincitur inimicus, et opera misericordiae habere non possemus, nisi caritatem haberemus; caritas autem nobis nulla esset, nisi per Spiritum sanctum acciperemus: ille docet manus nostras in proelium, et digitos nostros ad bellum; illi recte dicimus: Misericordia mea, a quo habemus etiam ut misericordes simus.”

eternal life. All three of these belong together to the more general work of the Spirit's love re-ordering our relation to time so that we eventually come to rest eternally in God. Augustine describes this work of the Spirit in his commentaries on Genesis. God's rest on the seventh day of creation is not because God was tired of a hard week's work, but instead it prophecies the rest we will share with God after our good works are done. Thus the hermeneutical principle that Augustine applies to God's Sabbath rest is the same one we encountered above: God's rest indicates the rest God brings us after our good works. This interpretation is present in Augustine's first commentary on Genesis, though without reference to the Spirit.²²² In his mature commentaries--*Confessions* 13, *Literal Interpretation of Genesis*--he attributes this rest to the Spirit.²²³ Part of the Spirit's perfecting work in us is to lead us through time to that eternal rest. Augustine writes in *Literal Interpretation of Genesis*:

[God] granted in himself to the rational creation in which he also created the man, after perfecting him through the gift of the Holy Spirit 'through which charity is poured out in our hearts' (Romans 5:5) so that we should be born along by the impetus of desire to the place where we shall find rest, the place, that is, where we shall look for nothing further, when we reach it. After all, just as God is rightly said to do whatever we do by his working in us, so God is rightly said to rest, when we rest thanks to his munificence.²²⁴

Thus patience, hope and mercy are appropriated especially to the Spirit because they are all aspects of God's Love as it orders our relation to time: we patiently endure, we hope for eternal rest, and we do works of mercy. Apart from these virtues that alter our relation to

²²² *Gn. adv. Man.* 1.23.33.

²²³ Augustine's Scriptural justifications for associating the Spirit with rest are typically ingenuous. In the order of the commandments, for example, the first commandment against idolatry corresponds to the Father, who is the origin of the Godhead; the second to the Son, whose name we take in vain if we do not believe he is divine; and, third, the observance of the Sabbath promises eternal rest, which comes by the sanctification effected by the Spirit (s. 33.3; see also s. 9.6). The same point can also be made numerologically, as the pneumatological significance of the seventh day of creation corresponds to the seven gifts of the Spirit in Isaiah (11:2-3). Those seven gifts, when reversed, outline the journey of our sanctification, beginning with fear (of God) and finally concluding with wisdom (s. 270.6). That God in Genesis hallows the seventh day alone is also taken to indicate that it refers to both our sanctification and to the Holy Spirit (s. 9.6; the same argument is present, though largely explicitly, in s.270.6; also see *Gn. litt* 4.17.29).

²²⁴ *Gn. litt* 4.9.16 (PL 34): "Quid restat ut intellegamus, nisi forte creaturae rationali, in qua et hominem creavit, in seipso requiem praeuisse, post eius perfectionem, per donum Spiritus sancti, per quem diffunditur caritas in cordibus nostris ut illuc feramur appetitu desiderii, quo cum venerimus requiescamus, id est nihil amplius requiramus? Sicut enim recte dicitur Deus facere, quidquid ipso in nobis operante fecerimus; ita recte dicitur Deus requiescere, cum eius munere requiescemus."

time, our judgment of others would either exceeds its proper limits, or we might reject the need for judgment all together.

IV. Mercy and Ordered Love

In order to more fully explore the nature of mercy, we must now see how it belongs to ordered love. Our lengthy consideration of our middle position in the previous chapter will serve us here, for we will see that to be merciful is to attend to another as an equal under God. Such attention to others consists both in acting to relieve their suffering (mercy as a type of work) and being moved by it (mercy as an emotion). We will briefly explicate Augustine's own development on this matter, as he begins, following the majority of his Patristic predecessors, upholding freedom from emotional disturbance (*apatheia*) as an ideal Christians ought to pursue. His ultimate rejection of *apatheia* is a result both of his understanding of our middle position and of a right relation to time.

Given Jesus' clear priority on mercy, Augustine is not unique among Patristic authors in emphasizing it;²²⁵ what sets him apart in his mature works is his integration of the priority of mercy with a doctrine of the emotions.²²⁶ Here he differs quite dramatically with his early affirmations of *apatheia* in his later rejection of it. Marcia Colish summarizes this

²²⁵ It is repeatedly emphasized by Patristic authors that Christian obedience includes acting mercifully, which is generally interpreted as giving to those in need and forgiving sins; see Justin Martyr, *apol.* 1.15; Clement of Alexandria, *paed.* 1.8; Tertullian, *adv. Mar.* 4.17; Origen, *de princ.* 4.37; Athanasius, *c. Ar.* 3.25.19. A brief quotation from Ambrose serves to summarize this tradition: "Nothing commends the Christian soul so much as mercy. First and foremost, it must be shown towards the poor: you should treat nature's produce as a common possession; it is all the fruit of the ground, brought forth for the benefit of all alike" (*De officiis* 1.11.38, trans. Ivor J. Davidson).

²²⁶ On *apatheia* in the Church Fathers see Simon Knuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). Knuttila concludes his section on the Fathers prior to Augustine thus: "Treatment of emotions had a very central role in Origenist and Cappadocian theology. Moderating or extirpating them formed the main topic of the preparatory part of the ascent, and the mature spiritual life was described with the help of conceptions derived from emotional contexts, though the higher feelings were sharply separated from the ordinary emotions" (p. 151). It is important to keep in mind, as Knuttila notes, that Christian *apatheia* resulted in the loss of "self-will" and therefore led to a heightened capacity for the love of God and one's neighbour: "...human emotions involve the consciousness of the self as attached to finite things, and that the mystical feelings of transformed persons involve a new awareness of oneself in relation to the divinity" (p. 127). The affirmation of *apatheia* as a Christian virtue, and, indeed, its exact definition, is not universal. Augustine Michael Casiday observes one early Father, Justin Martyr, rejected it as an impossibility prior to the resurrection; see 'Apatheia and Sexuality in the Thought of Augustine and Cassian', *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 45:4 (2001) 359-94 (p. 365). Yet Augustine, as we will see, not only thought it impossible, but also undesirable.

development well: “While Augustine adheres consistently to the Stoic view of the passions as irrational intellectual judgments he does not support the idea of *apatheia* consistently. He defends the possibility and desirability of *apatheia* in his earliest works but subsequently modifies or rejects this position on both theological and psychological grounds.”²²⁷ We need not trace this development in detail, especially as Colish has already done so.²²⁸ We will limit our tracing of this development primarily to three texts in order to bring out how Augustine’s thinking on mercy involves both creation order (our middle position) and eschatology (the nature of this age).

In his early affirmation of mercy as an act of neighbour-love in *Ways of Life*, Augustine excludes any emotional content from concern for the neighbour’s well-being. He argues that neighbour-love has two aspects which conform to human beings’ nature as one composed of soul and body: discipline and mercy, respectively. To be merciful, then, is to care for another’s bodily need. He also suggests, out of concern for the quality of the help provided, that the merciful person ought to be free of emotional turmoil when attending to another. He concedes that the term “mercy” (*miser cordia*) may seem to literally imply emotion, but he then counters that we ought to understand it as coming from “motives of benevolence”: “There is no harm in the word ‘compassionate’ when there is no passion in the case” (27.53). Those who regard mercy as a vice do not see that one may be moved to act mercifully “by a sense of duty” without any “distressful emotion” (27.54).²²⁹ Thus, Augustine justifies his affirmation of mercy as an appropriate response to our neighbour’s bodily nature and the need that comes with it, even while it demonstrates his commitment to *apatheia*.

²²⁷ Marcia Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages: II. Stoicism in Christian Latin Thought Through the Sixth Century* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), p.221.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 221-225.

²²⁹ *mor.* (CSEL 90: 57): “Etiam si id faciat mente tranquilla, nullis aculeis doloris instinctus, sed adductus officio bonitatis, misericors tamen uocandus est. Huic enim nihilo best nomen, cum absit miseria.”

In *On Christian Teaching*, approximately seven years later, we see Augustine argue that mercy belongs to ordered love on the grounds that all human beings are equal under God. In this text, the question of mercy's emotional content is not raised; Augustine's concern instead is about the justification for acting mercifully. Augustine's discussion of mercy follows his explication of our middle position and his discussion of judgment. He invokes our middle position when he lists the four "things" we are to love: "one, that which is above us; two, that which we are; three, that which is close to us; four, that which is beneath us" (1.23.22). Following his remarkable statement on judgment ("Living a just and holy life depends on being a good judge of things") he establishes that God ("that which is above") is the source of value of our fellow human beings ("that which is close to us"). A good judge, then, recognizes that "every human being, precisely as human, is to be loved on God's account (*omnis homo in quantum homo est, diligendus est propter Deum*)" (1.27.28). The radical implication of this judgment is that all human beings "should be loved equally (*Omnes autem aequae diligendi sunt*)" (1.28.29). Augustine thereafter goes on to acknowledge that we cannot "be of service to everyone", so that, we must allow circumstance to determine who, of all the human beings that we are called to love equally, belong under our care. One such circumstance is those around us who are most in need. Eric Gregory captures Augustine's meaning: "a good lover will not love *every* neighbor as much as she will love *any* neighbor who happens across her way."²³⁰ All specific circumstances that place someone under our care, whether location, need or what have you, are treated as secondary to the fundamental equality of all human beings as creatures of God. Love that is ordered by judgment keeps that equality primarily in view, though secondary circumstances do determine whom we will care for (1.28.29).

²³⁰ Eric Gregory, *Politics and the Order of Love: An Augustinian Ethic of Democratic Citizenship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010) p. 295.

This affirmation of equality is the basis of Augustine's discussion of mercy several paragraphs later. The issue of mercy arises because, in a way characteristic of his desire to be comprehensive, Augustine wonders whether angels also belong to the category of neighbours. In order to answer this question, he must define what a neighbour is, and he ultimately concludes that *all* human beings with whom we may come into contact are potentially our neighbours: a neighbour is "the person to whom an act of mercy is due if he needs it or would be due it if he needed it (...*proximum esse intellegamus, cui uel exhibendum est officium misericordiae, si indiget, uel exhibendum esset, si indigeret*)" (30.31). We note that he includes in this definition not only those who *are* in need, but also those who, if they were in need, would deserve our care and attention; the definition, then, includes *everyone*. Conversely, a neighbour includes anyone who helps *us* in our need or would help us if we were in need. This includes not just fellow human beings, but also angels whom Scripture says do act for our benefit, and, on this same basis, even the Son incarnate as Christ (30.33). For our purposes, the angels and Christ are a secondary concern. What is most central for us is that throughout the discussion, Augustine goes to great lengths to define our common equality under God as the basis for love, which includes mercy. The giving and receiving of goods, whether we are in need or others are, arises from that recognition of one another as equals under God.

Decades later, in *City*, we see Augustine again affirm mercy on the grounds of others' equality with us, and, further, he now affirms its emotional content. In his brief summary of the Christian approach to emotions in *City* 9, he applies the logic of our middle position: the Christian "subjects [his] mind to God itself to rule and help it, and the passions to the mind, to moderate and check them, so that it might turn them to just uses" (my translation, 9.5).²³¹

²³¹ *civ. Dei* 9.5 (CCSL 47: 254): "Deo quippe illa ipsam mentem subicit regendam et iuuandam mentique passiones ita moderandas atque frenandas, ut in usum iustitiae conuertantur."

In this brief definition, we see the self subjected to God, and, with the language of ‘use’, our passions are considered a feature of creation that ought to be used. The middle position is further elaborated when he specifies what “just uses” our passions can serve, and he turns to the neighbour: “For I do not think that any right-minded person would condemn anger directed at a sinner in order to correct him; or sadness on behalf of one who is afflicted in order to comfort him; or fear for one in peril, lest he perish” (9.5).²³² The repeated use of purpose clauses displays how the passion is ordered to the other’s good; in all these examples, it plays a part in attending to our neighbour’s well-being. Augustine then goes on to define mercy as “com-passion for another’s misery, which prompts us to help him if we can.”²³³ Mercy as an emotion alerts me to another’s need by causing me to suffer because of another’s suffering; the other comes fully to view as an equal demanding I act. Thus we see that Augustine has admitted the emotional content of mercy into ordered-love because it attunes me to the demands of my fellow creatures. His early affirmation of mercy as an action demanded of us by our neighbour’s need is now the grounds on which he affirms mercy as an emotion. He remains concerned, however, that this emotion not stand in for rational deliberation. Mercy must be “obedient to reason, when mercy is shown without violating justice, as when the poor are relieved or the penitent forgiven.” The emotion of mercy cannot be used to justify any actions, but ought to focus on the two biblically-prescribed works of mercy (9.5). Thus whereas in *Ways of Life and Christian Teaching* Augustine affirmed works of mercy but excluded its emotional content, in *City* he affirms mercy’s emotional content precisely on the grounds that it may awaken us to the suffering of others and so move us to act.

²³² *Ibid.*: “Iraci enim peccanti ut corrigatur, contristari pro afflicto ut liberetur, timere periclitanti ne pereat nescio utrum quisquam sana consideratione reprehendat.”

²³³ *Ibid.*: “Quid est autem misericordia nisi alienae miseriae quaedam in nostro corde compassio, qua utique si possumus subvenire compellimur?”

In his mature thought, then, emotions may play a positive role because they can disclose to us our inherent sociality. We see this in Augustine's description of Adam and Eve's Edenic emotions. Of our four passions, a division Augustine takes from Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations*, only one of them is present in Eden: joy (*laetitia*): "The love of the pair for God and for one another was undisturbed, and they lived in a faithful and sincere fellowship which brought great gladness (*gaudium*) to them, for what they loved was always at hand for their enjoyment (*fruendum*)" (14.10). Augustine stresses that the other three passions--desire (*cupiditas*), fear (*metus*) and sadness (*contristare*)--are not present because sin is not present. Whereas three of the four passions are defined by lack, the gladness present in Eden arises from satisfaction, specifically the satisfactions particular to life with one another and God.

And what about emotion after humanity's expulsion from the Garden? Augustine looks to the example of Christ who, as he describes in *City*, experienced all four passions. He specifies that Jesus "accepted these emotions into His human mind for the sake of His own assured purpose, and when He so willed, just as He was made man when He so willed." Christ's emotions, then, are at the service of his whole mission. Indeed, Augustine writes that Christ displayed emotion when he "judged (*iudicavit*)" they were appropriate (14.9). He uses this same language of judgment in another description of Christ's emotions in a commentary on the Gospel of John. There, he writes that Christ displayed fear at his own impending death and grief at Lazarus' death in order to comfort Christians who are also so moved. Christ rescues us from despairing that such emotions exclude us from salvation by bearing our weakness in this way.²³⁴ To live a fully human life, then, as the incarnation demonstrates conclusively, includes emotions.

²³⁴ *Jo. ev. tr.* 60.5.

Yet we are unlike Christ, in that not all of our emotions are a result of judgments, but often arise against our will, as when we are overcome by tears. Even so, Augustine argues, we will do far more harm from attempting to free ourselves of emotion than we would do by seeking to order emotions by love. There is a certain continuity, then, between the role of emotion in Eden, and the role of emotion even in this fallen age: both then and now, emotion involves a certain attunement to ourselves, and, most importantly, to others. To struggle against this reality, he writes, “while we are in this place of misery, is only purchased, as one of the world’s literati perceived and remarked, at the price of blunted sensibilities of both mind and body” (14.9).

Augustine’s affirmation of mercy’s emotional content has brought him to the fore in recent scholarly discussions on the history of emotion, especially given that mercy can alternately be translated as “compassion”, that great virtue of our age. However the account we often get of Augustine in such works does not properly consider how his approach to mercy involves a certain view of *both* the order of creation and of this age after the Fall and prior to God’s final judgment. We will engage with two prominent scholars who have recently written on Augustine as part of their larger projects, then, in order to bring out what is lost when the full theological density of Augustinian mercy is lost.

We begin with Martha Nussbaum, whose magisterial work on emotion, *Upheavals of Thought*, includes a chapter on Augustine. Nussbaum praises Augustine for upholding compassion as a virtuous emotion, rather than, as many of his predecessors had done, seeing it “as something contaminated by bondage to worldly objects.”²³⁵ She argues this affirmation of emotion comes from his view that “it is appropriate to acknowledge the truth; and emotions are acknowledgments of the truth of our profound neediness” (541). We relate to

²³⁵ Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 528. Nussbaum’s account of key figures prior to Augustine does exclude some for whom mercy was decidedly a virtue, including, most notably, Jesus of Nazareth and the Hebraic tradition in which he stands.

one another “as needy and incomplete, and recognizing the need of another should give rise to Christian love” (551). Ultimately, however, Nussbaum rejects Augustine’s theological understanding of compassion as inadequate because it is dominated by an unhelpful (and unhealthy) focus on sin. When, she argues, “the deep need of all is for salvation” (543) the consequence is that the motivation for compassion and foundation for solidarity with others is “our common descent from Adam...our original sinfulness” (550). Most important for our purposes, Nussbaum continues: “It seems wrong to equate all humans in their sinfulness, and wrong to base relations on a recognition of equal sinfulness (551)” and, as she makes the point even more emphatically:

Our sense of incompleteness is focused insistently on our sinfulness, on our remoteness from God. What we see with compassion in our neighbours is this same sinfulness, this same need for God’s grace. This means that Augustinian love is committed to denying the importance of the worldly losses and injustices to which my neighbour may attach importance, in order to assert the primacy of the need for God and the potential for grace. (552)

Nussbaum sees in Augustine’s understanding of mercy a focus on human equality, and yet it is an equality that is defined entirely by human sinfulness.

This account has recently been criticized in another much-discussed work by a prominent philosopher that includes a chapter on Augustine: Nicholas Wolterstorff’s *Justice: Rights and Wrongs*.²³⁶ Wolterstorff disagrees with Nussbaum that Augustine’s affirmation of compassion comes from his recognition of human neediness, and instead argues that Augustine’s mature view comes as a result of his wrestling with the implications of Christ’s command that we are to love our neighbours as ourselves:

A...contemporary of Augustine would have had no trouble understanding why, given A’s convictions about the impossibility of attaining self-sufficiency and the impropriety of even trying to do so, he would affirm the legitimacy of such emotions as fear, anxiety, regret, and anger; these all pertain to what happens to oneself. What he would not have understood is Augustine’s affirmation of the worth of compassion...I see nothing in Augustine’s thought that would explain his affirmation

²³⁶ Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Justice: Rights and Wrongs* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

of compassion other than that he saw this as an implication of obedience to Christ's command to love one's neighbour as one loves oneself. (204)

This is an insightful criticism: Wolterstorff is right that need alone does not explain Augustine's development from his earlier devotion to *apatheia* to his later commendation of compassion.²³⁷ We can develop this criticism further, demonstrating that Augustine does not think that mercy should be motivated by recognition of another's need alone. Instead, as we have already demonstrated above, to act mercifully is to recognize others' equality with me and to seek to relieve their suffering.

Is our common sinfulness alone the basis for mercy, then? We begin to address this question with a sermon that clearly includes what Nussbaum's reading of Augustine would expect us to find, but that also includes *more*. Augustine is commending works of mercy to his flock, and he reminds them, as we have seen above, that we can receive daily forgiveness of our sins by works of mercy: "Show mercy to a man, man, and God will show mercy to you. You a man, the other a man, two pitiful (*miseri*) creatures. God, though, is not pitiful (*miser*) but full of mercy (*misericors*). So if you, a pitiful creature, don't have mercy on a pitiful creature, how can you demand mercy from the one who will never be pitiable?"²³⁸ So far, Nussbaum seems right. Augustine is arguing that to refuse mercy to another amounts to a rejection of one's own need under God. God alone is the source of pity, and we all together are pitiful--literally, in need of mercy.²³⁹ Yet elsewhere in the sermon, he indicates that there

²³⁷ My agreement with Wolterstorff's claim is not unqualified, however. One of the primary weaknesses of Wolterstorff's interpretation of Augustine is his severely limited, and at times inaccurate, account of this development in Augustine's thought. In addition to obedience to the dual-love command, Augustine was also clearly impressed by the biblical descriptions of the emotions of Christ, and, to a lesser extent, of Saint Paul.

²³⁸ s. 259.3 (PL 38): "Miserere hominis, homo, et tui miserebitur Deus. Tu homo, et alter homo, duo miseri. Deus autem non est miser, sed misericors. Si autem miser non miseratur miserum, quomodo exigit misericordiam ab illo qui nunquam erit miser?"

²³⁹ This sermon also fits with Peter Brown's recent analysis in *Through the Eye of a Needle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012) of what we can learn from Augustine's sermons about his approach to class divisions. Brown sees in Augustine's sermons the repeated suggestion that the real cause of division in his congregations is not that some are rich and others poor, but pride (349). Brown argues that with the overcoming of pride comes generosity that can be the basis for the unity of congregations; he writes that Augustine is "giving the good rich a new role. They were to act as the pillars of a hierarchical society that functioned for the greater glory of God. Frank superiorities of wealth and power might exist, but they existed only on the condition

is more to this recognition of another's humanity than simply another's sinfulness. Augustine bemoans the fact that often our humanity itself is not enough to prompt works of mercy; we are far more likely to act when another is enduring some suffering that we once shared: "And while he couldn't be induced to show pity by their companionship in humanity (*societas humanitatis*), he is induced to do so by companionship in calamity (*consortium calamitatis*)" (259.3). He goes on to advise us to perform works of mercy face-to-face in order that we might be confronted with the other's equality with us; while the calamity may be the cause of our encounter, it can facilitate the discovery of our common humanity. So give to those in need with your own hands, he counsels us, so that in so doing you might experience "a kind of sympathy (*compatitur*) with common humanity and infirmity" to discover that what unites us "isn't calamity...but humanity (*calamitas, sed humilitas*)" (259.4). I would like to emphasize especially the "and"; "common humanity", in other words, is not entirely inscribed by our "infirmity". If so, then even in this sermon in which Augustine is clearly reminding us that we are all sinners in need of God's grace to motivate us to perform acts of mercy, he also hopes that meeting others' needs will help us recognize their humanity, a humanity that does not consist only in their need.

That another's need ought not to define our perception of, nor our relation to her is explicated even more starkly in Augustine's 8th sermon from the *Tractates on the First Letter of John*. This text especially demonstrates the inadequacy of Nussbaum's critique. Again in this text we see Augustine define the nature of mercy according to our middle position. He reminds us that God had initially given human beings dominion only over the animals, not their fellow human beings (8.6), which leads him to recall our middle position: "Mark what I say: God, man, beasts: that is, above you, God; beneath you, the beasts" (8.7). The conclusion

that they were wielded without disruptive arrogance. For once the rigid stance of pride was removed, wealth could be used without inhibition to promote the concord of a Christian society" (350).

is that we ought to be “wishing all men to be your equals (*Debes velle omnes homines aequales tibi esse*)” (8.8). Augustine is especially critical of works of mercy which are motivated from a proud enjoyment of superiority:

For if you have done a kindness to the wretched, perchance you desire to lift up yourself over against him, and you wish him to be subject to you, who has done the kindness to him. He was in need, you bestowed; you seem to yourself greater because you bestowed, than he upon whom it was bestowed. Wish him your equal that you both may be under the One Lord, on whom nothing can be bestowed.²⁴⁰

Notably, we see that Augustine ties our desire that all be our equals to God as the source of all good. Yet his advice that in our works of mercy we are to “wish him [our] equal” seems to contradict his repeated use of our middle position to establish our equality with others. He seems to say, on the one hand, we *are* all equal, while, on the other hand, we ought to *wish* all to be our equals? How are we to account for this?

The challenge is to properly relate our equality as creatures under God to whatever inequalities do exist. Augustine wants works of mercy to arise from the recognition of another’s equality under God as the primary and enduring reality about them, and to see any inequality as secondary and temporary. Thus he writes that if our love of another is entirely determined by our feeding them, clothing them, or burying them, then we love them like a piece of food that we can consume: that is, decidedly not as our equals. Especially noteworthy is that Augustine places feeding and clothing with *burying*: this underlines how works of mercy are responding to temporary conditions that, like death, will pass away in the life to come. To make another’s need the defining characteristic that my love responds to in them is, in a certain sense, to will the continued existence of sin and death. In contrast he suggests that we may more truly love the happy man because there is no way in which our love is bound up with being superior to him, for he is not in need of our support (8.5).

²⁴⁰ *ep. Jo.* 8.5 (PL 35): “Nam si praestiteris misero, fortassis extollere te cupis adversus eum, et eum tibi vis esse subiectum, qui auctor est tui beneficii. Ille indiguit, tu impertitus es; quasi maior videris quia tu praestitisti, quam ille cui praestitum est. Opta aequalem, ut ambo sub uno sitis cui nihil praestari potest.”

Yet this is not to say that the secondary and temporary nature of inequalities is to down-play the need to act. On the contrary, it is clear that Augustine is concerned that any enjoyment we take in our superiority to others will affect our actions towards them and prevent us working for equality. He gives the brilliant example of a teacher:

As long as he is slow, he learns from you; as long as he is untaught, he has need of you; and you are seen to be the teacher, he the learner; therefore you seem to be the superior, because you are the teacher; he the inferior, because the learner. Except you wish him to be your equal, you wish to have him always a learner. But if you wish him always a learner, you will be an envious teacher.²⁴¹

A failure to recognise another's equality with us, and an enjoyment of whatever secondary inequality exists, corrupts our action toward them and perverts that relation.

Augustine applies this also to that other work of mercy, the forgiveness of sins, and he does so with reference to enemy-love. Enemy-love is a special focus of the 8th homily because it presents a challenge to Augustine's full-throated praise of the epistle as an undoubted masterpiece on love; it never mentions enemy-love, despite the priority that Jesus places on it. Augustine argues enemy-love is implicitly present throughout the epistle's repeated calls to love our brethren, because the basis of enemy-love is that we want our enemies to become our brethren. The importance of this exegetical move for us is that it is an application of his consistent argument that our love must respond to some good in another, and when we cannot discern some actual good, a potential one will do. For us as human beings, all enemies are potentially our brothers: "wish for him that he may have with you eternal life; wish for him that he may be your brother; when you love him, love a brother. For you love in him not what he is, but what you wish that he may be."²⁴² The forgiveness of sins, then, is tied to the hope that our enemies will turn from sin. In so doing, we imitate Christ.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.* 8.8: "Quamdiu tardus est, discit a te; quamdiu indoctus est, indiget tui; et tu videris doctor, ille autem discens: tu ergo superior, quia doctor es; ille inferior, quia discens. Nisi illum optes aequalem, semper vis habere discentem. Si autem vis semper habere discentem, invidus eris doctor."

²⁴² *Ibid.* 8.10: "Opta illi ut habeat tecum vitam aeternam; opta illi ut sit frater tuus. Si ergo hoc optas, diligendo inimicum, ut sit frater tuus; cum eum diligis, fratrem diligis. Non enim amas in illo quod est; sed quod vis ut sit."

Christ's forgiveness of sinners from the cross was at the service of their salvation: "Whom He willed to be forgiven, them He willed to be changed: whom He Willed to be so changed, of enemies he deigned to make better, and did in truth make them so."²⁴³ Again, then, our love even of our enemies is not defined by whatever temporary or secondary characteristic about them sets them in opposition to us as our "enemies." Our works of mercy arise from our recognition that they remain our equals, and therefore we ought to share whatever goods we receive, and they are in need of, with them; we hope, above all, that we will share together the eternal life won for us by Christ.

We have demonstrated, then, that Nussbaum's interpretation of Augustine is incomplete. Mercy's recognition of equality is not merely an equality in sinfulness, but more significantly an equality as fellow creatures under God. Indeed, Nussbaum's equation of our common descent from Adam with sinfulness nicely locates the problem; certainly, for Augustine, we are all sinners as children of Adam, but he is also always clear that sinfulness is a privation of our goodness. Augustine shares with Nussbaum a concern that compassion cannot just arise from seeing my neighbour as a fellow sinner. Certainly human sinfulness is more foregrounded in his thought than Nussbaum's, nonetheless Augustine consistently argues that while mercy is a response to another's need, need alone ought not to define my relation to or perception of my neighbour.

There is more to Augustine's account of mercy than the order of creation; he also sees mercy as belonging specifically to this age, which follows both the Fall and Christ's coming, but precedes the final judgment. With this eschatological horizon in view, Nussbaum is right to suggest that when it comes to mercy in particular, and love of neighbour in general, Augustine "assert[s] the primacy of the need for God and the potential for grace." Not all

²⁴³ *Ibid.*: "Quibus voluit ignosci, mutari illos voluit: quos voluit mutari, ex inimicis fratres facere dignatus est, et vere sic fecit."

inequalities, as it were, are equal; we are concerned above all with others' spiritual well-being. Unlike Nussbaum, Wolterstorff denies that Augustine praises especially those emotions which have spiritual well-being in view. In Wolterstorff's account of Augustine's development, he argues that the early Augustine thought that we should love only our neighbour's soul (here, he refers to a passage in *On True Religion*), whereas the mature Augustine thinks we should love (and grieve harm done to) body and soul (here, the key texts are from *City*) (198-199). Ultimately, Wolterstorff argues, the mature Augustine affirms emotion as a feature of our humanity. "God made us thus. To try to undo this dimension of ourselves is...to try to undo the work of the Creator" (199). Or, as he writes even more emphatically later: "[Emotions] belong to our God-created nature. God pronounced his creation good. We must do so as well. It is good to grieve over the death and misery of family and friends, good to feel compassion over the misery of the neighbor. One's life is more worthy if it contains such grief than if it does not" (220). There are two main problems with Wolterstorff's account: one with his narrative of Augustine's development, and the other with his conclusion about emotion being properly human. The problem with Wolterstorff's narrative of Augustine's development is that it is demonstrably false. In a text that precedes *On True Religion*, *Ways of Life*, as we saw above, Augustine sees neighbour-love as involving love of body (mercy) and soul (discipline); though he is also clear that the love of another's soul is primary. While it is certainly the case that Augustine's understanding of the relation between body and soul is a subject that he continuously revises and rethinks,²⁴⁴ he does not change between *On True Religion* and *City* from excluding the body from neighbour-love to then including it. Second, and more importantly for our purposes, Wolterstorff's argument that Augustine affirms our emotions as simply a part of our created humanity does not take into account how Augustine also situates them within the story of

²⁴⁴ See Rist's excellent chapter, "Soul, body and personal identity", pp. 92-147.

creation, fall and redemption. This is evident in a favourite passage of Wolterstorff's, in which Augustine describes the grief that comes with loving friends in this age; Wolterstorff quotes this passage at length and repeatedly, but excludes these lines: "Although, then, our present life is afflicted, sometimes in a milder, sometimes in a more painful degree, by the death of those very dear to us...yet we would prefer to hear that such men were dead rather than to hear or perceive that they had fallen from the faith, or from virtue--in other words, that they were spiritually dead" (19.8). In other words, Wolterstorff fails to acknowledge how Augustine does affirm emotion as part of our (fallen) humanity, but Augustine also believes that our emotions are re-configured by Christian hope.²⁴⁵ As James Wetzel so beautifully puts it, Augustine would have us grieve over loss, but he would also teach us that "I lose others more profoundly to sin than I do to death."²⁴⁶

It is crucial for our understanding of mercy, then, that Augustine affirms emotion not merely as belonging to our humanity, but he also connects Christians' emotions to our desire for salvation. We see this in *City* 14. 9. Augustine argues that Christians should experience all four passions. He then cites a flurry of Scriptural quotations which refer to these emotions; notably, he first mentions our fear of eternal punishment and our desire for eternal life. His subsequent Scriptural quotations regarding fear, desire, grief and joy, whether on our own or others' behalf, are all related to salvation (14.9).

Even more importantly for our purposes is that in two texts, *On Patience* and *Literal Interpretation of Genesis*, Augustine sees such rightly-ordered emotions as a result of the Spirit's work in re-ordering our relation to time. It is notable that in *City*, his discussion of

²⁴⁵ I do think, nonetheless, that Wolterstorff is right to take issue with Nussbaum. Not, as he does, that she argues Augustinian mercy is concerned primarily with another's salvation, but rather with her narrow conception of salvation. The problem is evident when she writes: "Augustinian love is committed to denying the importance of the worldly losses and injustice to which my neighbour may attach importance, in order to assert the primacy of the need for God and the potential for grace" (252). Certainly for Augustine injustice, and many worldly losses, ought not to be opposed to grace and God. Nussbaum's conception of Augustinian salvation seems to be that of disembodied, solitary souls enjoying ecstasy with God. A quick read of the concluding books of both *conf.* and *civ. Dei* indicate otherwise.

²⁴⁶ Wetzel, *Perplexed*, p. 30.

emotion uses language with strong pneumatological significance. We see this especially in his definition of emotions as forms of will:

The right will is, therefore, well-directed love (*bonus amor*), and the wrong will is ill-directed love (*malus amor*). Love, then, yearning to have what is loved, is desire (*cupiditas*); and having and enjoying it, is joy (*laetitia*); fleeing what is opposed to it, it is fear (*timor*); and feeling what is opposed to it, when it has befallen it, it is sadness (*tristitia*). Now these motions are evil if the love is evil; good if the love is good.²⁴⁷

Consistently in Augustine's works, as we have seen in our earlier chapters, when we encounter will and love, especially rightly-ordered love, we ought to expect to find the Spirit. In *City* 14, other than in a biblical quotation chapters earlier, this implicit pneumatological content is not explicitly connected with the Spirit (14.4).

In *On Patience and Literal Interpretation of Genesis* we do see Augustine connect rightly-ordered emotion and pneumatology.

First, in *On Patience*, written in 418 during the period in which Augustine was working on *City*, he argues that if our patience is ordered by lust, our emotions are determined by the loss or gain of some worldly good; loss and gain are understood entirely in terms of this age. In contrast, for the one ordered by love, he writes:

...a good will, by which we love God, cannot be in man, save in whom God also works to will. This good will therefore, that is, a will faithfully subjected to God, a will set on fire by sanctity of that ardor which is above, a will which loves God and his neighbor for God's sake; whether through love (*amore*), of which the Apostle Peter makes answer, 'Lord, You know that I love You,' whether through fear (*timore*), of which says the Apostle Paul, 'In fear and trembling work out your own salvation;' whether through joy (*gaudio*), of which he says, 'In hope rejoicing, in tribulation patient;' whether through sorrow (*tristitia*), with which he says he had great grief for his brethren; in whatever way it endures what bitterness and hardship so ever, it is the love of God which 'endures all things,' and which is not shed abroad in our hearts but by the Holy Spirit given unto us.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁷ *civ. Dei* 14.7 (CCSL 48:422): "Recta itaque uoluntas est bonus amor et uoluntas peruersa malus amor. Amor ergo inhians habere quod amatur, cupiditas est, id autem habens eoque fruens laetitia; fugiens quod ei aduersatur, timor est, idque si acciderit sentiens tristitia est."

²⁴⁸ *pat.* 22 (PL 40): "Ac per hoc voluntas bona, qua diligitur Deus, in homine non potest esse, nisi in quo Deus operatur et velle. Haec igitur voluntas bona, id est, voluntas Deo fideliter subdita, voluntas sanctitate superni ardoris accensa, voluntas quae diligit Deum et proximum propter Deum; sive amore, de quo respondet apostolus Petrus: Domine, tu scis quia amo te; sive timore, de quo dicit apostolus Paulus, in timore et tremore vestram ipsorum salutem operamini; sive gaudio, de quo dicit: Spe gaudentes, in tribulatione patientes; sive tristitia, qualem se dicit magnam habuisse pro fratribus suis: quaecumque amara et aspera sufferat, caritas Dei est, quae omnia tolerat, quae non diffunditur in cordibus nostris, nisi per Spiritum sanctum qui datus est nobis."

With these emotions, then, the gain and loss are defined within an eschatological horizon, as fear is concerned with our salvation and we rejoice in hope. We see, first, that there is a correspondence between the four emotions listed here and the four above in *City*. Two of these emotions (*timor* and *tristis*) match exactly in the two texts; in another instance, different terms are used for the same emotion, joy (*laetitia* and *gaudium*); and with the final term, whereas in *On Patience* Augustine refers simply to love (*amor*), in *City* he defines desire (*cupiditas*) as love (*amor*) “yearning to have what is loved.” He never uses *cupiditas*, however, to describe a rightly-ordered desire. He opts instead for *amor* to indicate a rightly-ordered desire. Most importantly for our purposes is that in *On Patience* the rightly-ordered emotions are a gift of the Spirit, as we also saw above, with even the requisite quotation of Romans 5:5. Just as we have seen in our earlier chapters that the Spirit re-orders our relation to creation, so we see here that the Spirit re-orders our relation to time so that our emotions are expressions of love for God that is oriented to the consummation of that love.

Second, in the *Literal Interpretation of Genesis*, Augustine discusses the joy and grief we take in our neighbour’s progress and regress respectively as the result of the Spirit in us. Augustine justifies his interpretation that God’s rest in Genesis refers to our rest by using other biblical quotations that follow this same logic. One of these is Ephesians 4:30: “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed on the day of redemption.”²⁴⁹

Augustine’s subsequent commentary on this verse is worth quoting at length:

It is impossible, after all, for the very substance of the Holy Spirit, by which he is whatever he is, to be grieved (*contristari*), since he is in possession of eternal and unalterable bliss, or rather is itself eternal and unalterable bliss. But because he dwells in the saints in such a way as to fill them with charity, by which as human beings they cannot but rejoice in time at the progress made by the faithful and at their good works, and by the same token cannot but be grieved at the lapsing and the sins of those over whose faith and piety they were rejoicing (such grief [*tristitia*] is praiseworthy, because it comes from the love by which the Holy Spirit pours into them), for this reason the Spirit himself is said to be grieved by those who act in such a way that the

²⁴⁹ For a similar interpretation of Ephesians 4:30 see *c. s. Ar.* 25.21.

saints are grieved by their behaviour, and this purely and simply because they have the Holy Spirit. It is his gift which makes them so good that the wicked sadden them, especially those whom they either knew or believed to be good. Not only is no fault to be found with such sadness, it is on the contrary to be most highly praised and commended.²⁵⁰

Augustine's remarkable conclusion is that while it would be erroneous to suggest that the Holy Spirit grieves, the Holy Spirit does make *us* grieve. Specifically, the Holy Spirit re-orders human beings so that love of neighbour inevitably leads to grief--he repeats twice in this short passage that it is a *praiseworthy* grief. Crucially for our purposes, this love is a *temporal* love which has God's judgment in view; I attend to my neighbour as one who is journeying towards God's judgment. I take joy in her progress and despair at her missteps. Thus while Augustine does reject *apatheia* as inhuman, , as Wolterstorff rightly notes, he also especially praises how the emotions of Christians are to become especially attuned to others' spiritual well-being, as Nussbaum emphasizes.

We can return to mercy, then, and see how it, too, involves a right relation to time. An especially clear example of this is apparent when Augustine contrasts mercy with anger.²⁵¹ Anger, which he defines as "lust for vengeance",²⁵² seeks vengeance for past sins, whereas mercy patiently awaits, and tries to facilitate, another's repentance. While we ought certainly to respond when we witness sin, vengeance is not ours to exact. Where certain verses depict the saints as desiring vengeance (Psalm 58:10/57:11, Revelation 6:10), Augustine suggests they must be read together with those verses which clearly teach us to love our enemies and respond to evil with good; what is sometimes described as vengeance denotes the delight the

²⁵⁰ *Gn. litt* 4.9.18 (PL 34): "Neque enim ipsa Spiritus sancti, qua est quidquid ipse est, substantia contristari potest; cum habeat aeternam atque incommutabilem beatitudinem, magisque sit ipsa aeterna et incommutabilis beatitudo. Sed quia ita in sanctis habitat, ut eos impleat caritate, qua necesse est ut homines ex tempore gaudeant profectu fidelium et bonis operibus; et ideo necesse est etiam contristentur lapsu vel peccatis eorum, de quorum fide ac pietate gaudebant; quae tristitia laudabilis est, quia venit ex dilectione quam Spiritus sanctus infundit: propterea ipse Spiritus dicitur contristari ab eis qui sic agunt, ut eorum factis contristentur sancti, non ob aliud nisi quia Spiritum sanctum habent; quo dono tam boni sunt, ut eos mali moestificent, hi maxime quos bonos fuisse sive noverunt sive crediderunt. Quae profecto tristitia non solum non culpanda, verum etiam praecipue laudanda ac praedicanda est."

²⁵¹ See, for example, *ep.* 91, s. 58.8, 63.2, 210.10.12, *en. Ps.* 111.4.

²⁵² *civ. Dei* 14.15, s. 58.8, 63.2, 211.6.

saints take in wrong-doers being corrected.²⁵³ In Augustine's reading, Scripture is clear that vengeance belongs to God alone, and, as we have seen, God mercifully leaves it until the final judgment to give us time to repent.²⁵⁴ He makes this point in a sermon on anger: "God's patience is still waiting for Christ's enemies to be converted, for the enemies of the martyrs to be converted. Who are *we* to insist on vengeance?"²⁵⁵ In the contrast between anger and mercy, then, it is not only that vengeance belongs to God, it is further that God has *delayed* exacting vengeance. Vengeful anger is a false way of living in time for it rejects God's patience, whereas mercy is referred to as conforming to that patience.²⁵⁶

The most destructive consequence of anger occurs when it "grows cold" and becomes hatred.²⁵⁷ In his marvellously creative interpretation of Christ's saying on the speck and the beam, he takes them to correspond to anger and hatred respectively.²⁵⁸ Several of his interpretations of this passage involve the suggestion that a speck can grow into a beam; when our anger does not pass, but becomes inflamed, often by suspicion,²⁵⁹ and then anger grows into hatred. Augustine argues that Scripture's advice to not let the sun set on our anger (Ephesians 4:26) intends to prevent its swift descent to hatred. And anger's destructive qualities are equally as swift: "...just as vinegar spoils a container if it is kept there too long, so anger ruins a heart if it lasts until the next day."²⁶⁰ Augustine connects the blindness brought about by the beam of hatred with two verses from the Epistle of First John: to hate

²⁵³ *en. Ps.* 78.14. Thus Augustine argues that Paul's advice that we are to feed our enemy and by so doing "you will be heaping coals of fire upon his head" (Rom 12:20) is not outlining a particularly clever strategy for revenge. He is suggesting that by doing good to one who did me wrong I will be confronting him with his wrong-doing and thus potentially cause him to correct himself; "the coals of fire" are the "red hot pangs of repentance" (*doc. Chr.* 3.16.24; see also *en. Ps.* 78.14, s. 149.18.19).

²⁵⁴ s. 315.8, *en. Ps.* 137.15, 78.14, *c. Jul. imp.* 3.26.

²⁵⁵ s. 58.8.

²⁵⁶ For a fuller treatment of Augustine on anger, specifically as related to his monastic rule, see Gertrude Gillette, *Four Faces of Anger: Seneca, Evagrius Ponticus, Cassian and Augustine* (University Press of America, 2010).

²⁵⁷ *en. Ps.* 30-3.4; s. 49.7.7, 58.7.8, 82.1.1.

²⁵⁸ For an account of the development of this understanding of speck and beam, and its origins in Cicero, see Luc Verheijen, 'The Straw, the Beam, the Tusculan Disputations and the Rule of Saint Augustine--On a Surprising Augustinian Exegesis' *Augustinian Studies*, 2 (1971), 17-36.

²⁵⁹ s. 49.7.7, 58.7.8, 82.1.1.

²⁶⁰ *ep.* 210.2.

our brother is not only to be in darkness²⁶¹ but to be guilty of murder:²⁶² “As far as you’re concerned, you have killed the person you hate.”²⁶³ What is most important for our purposes is the *finality* of hatred. We saw above that the desire for vengeance is a rejection of God’s patience; hatred seems to effect that rejection immediately by excluding the possibilities both of a loving relationship and that the other may change.

We have seen, then, the theological density of Augustinian mercy. It involves both taking up our place in creation, as we attend to others as equals under God, and living appropriately in this age which precedes God’s final judgment. Further, over the course of his development Augustine’s constant affirmation of the Christian’s duty to act mercifully would ultimately also serve as the grounds to affirm mercy as having emotional content.

V. Merciful Judgment

We come, then, to merciful judgment. We will detail four main features of merciful judgment which are the practical outworking of what we have considered above and will serve as the final section of this chapter.

To *judge* another mercifully, first, depends on not losing sight of the humanity I share with my fellow sinner. Augustine is especially concerned with how the goodness of another’s God-given nature may be obscured when our judgment of them focuses on their sin. As we have seen above, we are to love even our enemy because he is potentially our brother. Thus we have Augustine’s famous distinction, which is now something of a cliché in some Christian circles, between hating the sin and loving the sinner. This seemingly glib phrase expresses a profound theological insight: sin is not inherent to human beings as created by God, but is a perversion of their good nature; to judge another as though their sin defines

²⁶¹ *en. Ps.* 30-3.4.

²⁶² *s.* 49.7.7, 58.7.8, 387.2.

²⁶³ *s.* 58.7.8.

them, then, is to make a grave ontological error. In fact, you may as well be a Manichean!²⁶⁴ Thus when judging others mercifully, we make ourselves their “companion not in injustice but in humanity.”²⁶⁵ We recognize their equality with us in God’s creation, and we look forward to the full realization of that equality. In so doing, our judgment is attuned to the hope that God’s good creation will be restored in the one currently enslaved to sin. To judge others entirely in terms of their sin, as Augustine advises civil judges, is to deny they are fellow creatures: “You came from the same workshop, from the hands of the same craftsman; the same clay provided your raw material. Why destroy, by not loving, the one on whom you sit in judgment? Because what you are destroying is justice, by not loving the one on whom you sit in judgment.”²⁶⁶

The second feature of merciful judgment is that it ought to lead to correction. To judge that my neighbour has sinned and not to act to correct him would be like seeing him with a gaping wound and continue to walk on by.²⁶⁷ Thus, judgment is to correction as diagnosis is to treatment; the two moments belong inseparably together. Indeed, in *Confessions* 13 Augustine writes that we ought only to judge when we have “the power to correct what is wrong.”²⁶⁸ In a late treatise entitled *On Admonition and Grace*, Augustine mounts a vigorous defence of correction as a necessary Christian practice. While we ought to also pray for and instruct our fellow Christians, correction is another way we care for one another.²⁶⁹ Further, if the one we correct is elected by God to salvation, our rebuke is a means by which God is realizing that good in him. Questions of final salvation or damnation are not the issue, instead “since he who rebukes is ignorant whether [the one we correct] is so called, let him do with love what he knows ought to be done; for he knows that he ought to be

²⁶⁴ *c. Faust.* 19. 24.

²⁶⁵ *ep.* 153.3.

²⁶⁶ *s.* 13.8; see also *s.* 387.2.

²⁶⁷ *s.* 82.7.

²⁶⁸ *conf.* 13.23.34.

²⁶⁹ *corrept.* 5.7-8.

rebuked.”²⁷⁰ While God can act directly by various methods to correct us, God also uses us to correct one another. Augustine believes Scripture and the apostolic witness are clear on this point.²⁷¹ We are to be patient and forgive one another, but that does not mean that the Church is to lack means of discipline.²⁷²

Judgment at the service of correction may be contrasted with judgment that seeks to discern true Christians from false. The Donatists are most guilty of these judgments which deludedly claim both accuracy and finality. In opposition to such judgments, Augustine repeatedly refers to Jesus’ parable of the mixture of the wheat and tares before the harvest.²⁷³ Separation is reserved for the final judgment and is a responsibility given to the Son by the Father.²⁷⁴ Thus in one especially pointed sermon, Augustine says that the parable may be read as an address by God to all Christians who consider judging, and then separating themselves from false Christians; in the parable, God says to us, “I, if I wanted to judge now, would certainly not judge unfairly, would I? I, if I wanted to judge now, could not be mistaken, could I? So if I, who always judge rightly and cannot be mistaken, defer my judgment, how can you, ignorant though you are how you are likely to be judged, have the never to pass judgment so hastily?”²⁷⁵ Separation belongs only to God’s final judgment; correction belongs to our judgments in this age: “Why should the burdens of others concern us, except in order that we might correct those whom we can either by rebukes or by any discipline administered in the spirit of gentleness and with the carefulness of love?”²⁷⁶ Thus judgment at the service of correction attunes itself to this age of God’s patience. When judgment leads to correction, it finds a natural terminus; judgment is made, and then set aside because our judgments are

²⁷⁰ *corrept.* 9.25.

²⁷¹ *ep.* 265.

²⁷² *f. et. op.* 2.3.

²⁷³ *epp.* 105.5.16, 129.5, *conf.* 13.

²⁷⁴ *epp.* 93.9.31, 108.3.11.

²⁷⁵ *s.* 47. 6.

²⁷⁶ *ep.* 105.5.16.

always temporary and provisional. Further, the Christian is to offer correction as a means to help another prepare for God's final judgment.

Augustine divides correction into three possible forms: advice, authority and power.²⁷⁷ We see the use of these three forms outlined in Augustine's monastic rule. If a monk sees another monk looking at a woman inappropriately, he is first to advise him against doing so.²⁷⁸ If this advice does not effect change, the monk should then enlist the aid of other monks to gather together to speak with him.²⁷⁹ If this too is ineffective, then he should call the aid of authority: the superior is informed of the sin and will speak with the monk in private; again, if a private conversation makes no difference, more witnesses are called. Finally, if the monk still does not change his ways, the superior uses his power to prescribe a punishment. If the monk does not submit, he may be asked to leave the community in order that he not corrupt the other monks.²⁸⁰ Even so, with each form of correction that is taken, the healing of the offending monk is the primary concern, balanced with the need to prevent other monks from being corrupted by his bad influence.

We have seen above that Augustine disapproves of anger when it provokes the desire for vengeance or leads to hatred; he approves of anger, however, when it is "used" for correction. This is, we might say, *merciful* anger. He sees this occurring both in anger at ourselves and at others. When I am angry with myself for sinning, it may lead me to repent and seek God's forgiveness. This is Augustine's most common interpretation of the biblical advice, "Be angry and sin not" (Ephesians 4:26).²⁸¹ The anger can provide the impetus and energy to repent. Augustine describes how this occurred to him soon after his baptism. His increasing awareness of his past sins made him angry at himself, and this anger

²⁷⁷ s. *Dom. mon.* 1.20.66.

²⁷⁸ *reg.* 2: 4.7.

²⁷⁹ *reg.* 2: 4.8.

²⁸⁰ *reg.* 2: 4.9.

²⁸¹ *conf.* 9.4.10, *en. Ps.* 4.6, S 19.2, S 113.2.2.

simultaneously increased his resolve to do better and inflamed his love for God.²⁸² He even refers to repentance *as* anger: “What, after all, is a repentant person but a person who is angry with himself?”²⁸³ The intensity of anger, then, can be utilized for the self’s on-going re-formation.

And so with anger at others. In one letter, Augustine contrasts apathetic people who ignore wrong-doing with the good people who get angry, and act as a result. He describes a friend as having the skill of knowing “how to care for [sinners] with his anger.”²⁸⁴ Such anger, he writes, can “make good use of God’s patience.”²⁸⁵ Thus, the distinguishing feature of just anger is that it leads to correcting one who has committed a sin; as we saw above in his short discussion of the Christian approach to emotion, Augustine stated that surely no one would disapprove of anger when correction is the consequence.²⁸⁶ The paradigmatic example of such just anger is parental anger. When the child has done wrong, anger arises from love and leads to correction.²⁸⁷ Augustine writes that we would question a parent who did not get angry when, for example, her child was foolishly putting his life in danger.²⁸⁸

Third, merciful judgment calibrates its response to sin to what is deemed necessary for correction (*correptio*).²⁸⁹ So when writing to civil and episcopal authorities, Augustine advises that merciful judgment demands restraint in punishment.²⁹⁰ It seems that then, as now, the temptation for such authorities to be “tough on crime” was ever present. Augustine

²⁸² *conf.* 9.4.10.

²⁸³ *s.* 113.2.2; see also *s.* 19.2, *en. Ps.* 4.6.

²⁸⁴ *ep.* 151.7.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ *civ. Dei* 9.5.

²⁸⁷ *en. Ps.* 30-3.4, *s.* 387.2, 211.4, 82.2.

²⁸⁸ *s.* 82.2.

²⁸⁹ For a fuller consideration of correction in Augustine’s thought see Vittorino Grossi’s excellent entry on the subject, entitled “Correction”, in *Augustine Through the Ages*.

²⁹⁰ Robert Dodaro helpfully provides the historical background of these letters and discusses what they reveal about Augustine as a “political activist”; see ‘Between the Two Cities: Political Action in Augustine of Hippo’, in *Augustine and Politics*, ed. by John Doody, Kevin L. Hughes and Kim Paffenroth (Lexington Books, 2005), pp. 99-116.

suggests, in contrast, that they keep in mind “Christian gentleness”:²⁹¹ they ought to limit the severity of the punishment to what is necessary to maintain order in society and to correct the criminal.²⁹² Civil judges have a God-given duty to use punishment to instil fear in those who would break the law;²⁹³ and criminals’ freedom should be restrained in order that they not commit further crimes.²⁹⁴ He refers to this as taking part in God’s “providential care” of the world.²⁹⁵ Yet equally Christian love demands we care for criminals, as we ought to want “the weaker to become such as the stronger are now.”²⁹⁶ Thus whatever punishment is applied should not take away the criminals’ “life and bodily integrity” in order that it may serve “their benefit and salvation.”²⁹⁷ For any criminal, however guilty, the judgment should not deny them time and the capacity to repent.²⁹⁸

One application of this restraint is that, when possible and appropriate, correction ought to occur privately; the aim is to cause my brother to repent and amend himself, not to embarrass him or proudly air his sin. As we saw above in his monastic rule, Augustine advises speaking to an offending monk in private first. We see the exegesis behind this practice in a sermon. Solomon and Paul say to correct another in public, while Christ says to do so first in private. Augustine reconciles these verses by arguing that the different advice applies to different situations.²⁹⁹ When the sin has been committed privately, then correction also ought to be private in order to prevent the offender from having his sin become public knowledge. There are two circumstances in which the sin ought to be corrected publicly.

²⁹¹ *ep.* 91, 100, 133, 139. We also saw Augustine refer to “gentleness” in the quotation above regarding correction.

²⁹² *ep.* 91.6-7.

²⁹³ *ep.* 100.1.

²⁹⁴ *ep.* 133.1.

²⁹⁵ *ep.* 104.3.9.

²⁹⁶ *ep.* 139.3.

²⁹⁷ *ep.* 91.6-7.

²⁹⁸ *ep.* 100.1. One of Augustine’s most searching and moving letters describes his struggle to decide on punishments that will facilitate character. It includes an expression of confusion over how to apply many of the verses of Scripture on judgment that we have encountered in this chapter; see *ep.* 95.3.

²⁹⁹ *s.* 82.8-9.

First, if private correction is ineffective, then others ought to be brought in. This use of publicity is for the sake of the offender; others are brought along to more forcefully confront him with his sin.³⁰⁰ Second, if the sin has been committed publicly, then it ought to be corrected publicly because those witnesses have also been sinned against and are therefore involved. In such instances, concern must also be shown for others hurt by the sin.³⁰¹ Thus, the correction is only made public out of love for the offender or for those who have been offended against. Augustine is evidently addressing in his sermon some who have a perverse desire for all sins to be corrected in public. Instead, we ought to take Joseph as our model, who did not go public, though he initially suspected Mary had been unfaithful to him.³⁰²

Sometimes extreme measures are taken, but, again, only if they are deemed necessary to facilitate healing. If the above means of correction do not lead to repentance and amendment, then the offender may be excluded from the Christian community. The punishment does fit the crime, in so far as in refusing to repent and amend, the offender has effectively ruptured communion with his fellow Christians.³⁰³ Christians ought not to give or receive hospitality from a fellow Christian who is known to have sinned and not repented:³⁰⁴ “..we hold back even from our own brethren as a kind of reproof; we refuse to accept their hospitality for the sake of their correction.”³⁰⁵ Augustine argues this is a practice observed by Christ³⁰⁶ and advised by Paul.³⁰⁷ Such separation, however, is a means of love, aiming at eventual reconciliation and reunion, not prolonged separation.³⁰⁸

The more formal and extreme exclusion is excommunication. Thus, as we saw above, the means of correction moves from the offering of advice, to the intervention of authority, to

³⁰⁰ *s.* 82.7.

³⁰¹ *s.* 82.10.

³⁰² *Ibid.*

³⁰³ *s.* 82.7; *f. et. op.* 3.4.

³⁰⁴ *en. Ps.* 54.9.

³⁰⁵ *en. Ps.* 100.8.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁷ *f. et. op.* 2.3.

³⁰⁸ *en. Ps.* 54.9.

the execution of power. Excommunication is a practice that ultimately aims at reconciliation; it is justified when a Christian is guilty of a grave sin that cannot be dealt with by alms.³⁰⁹ Augustine refers to various Scriptural lists of such grave sins;³¹⁰ the great variety of these sins can be summarized under three categories: “impurity, idolatry and homicide.” Ideally, the Christian who committed such a sin confesses and submits himself voluntarily to excommunication for a period set by Church authorities.³¹¹ If this does not occur, the Church authority will enforce excommunication. Augustine specifies that this can only be done when a formal judgment has been made, whether in an ecclesiastical or civil court, and guilt has been “demonstrated by sure and certain indications.”³¹² Yet even when this is the case, we ought to regard the ex-communicant as a brother in need, and not as an enemy: “The apostle prescribes separation from such a person, but does not cut off love from him. If that eye of yours is healthy, you are alive yourself. To lose love is the death of you.”³¹³

Augustine also famously supported the exercise of power in issuing correction when dealing with the Donatists. This side of Augustine’s thought and career has received considerable attention and is surely one of the most controversial aspects of his life and thought. Our engagement with this issue will be limited: for our purposes, the relevant question is whether or not Augustine’s support of such coercion conflicts with his understanding of merciful judgment. The short (and uncomfortable) answer is no. Robert Markus has demonstrated that Augustine’s justification of coercion belongs to his recognition of the need for *disciplina*. Sinful human beings do not turn towards the good on their own, but need direction, and sometimes that direction must use severe methods to be effective.

³⁰⁹ *f. et. op.* 19.34.

³¹⁰ *s.* 56.12, 351.4, 352.8.

³¹¹ *s.* 351.7.

³¹² *s.* 351.10.

³¹³ *en. Ps.* 54.9.

Markus notes that the exercise of discipline includes correction,³¹⁴ which we have identified as central to merciful judgment.³¹⁵ Further, Augustine's criteria for using coercion also resonate with what we have discovered about the exercise of other-judgment. John Bowlin has helpfully summarised three criteria for coercion: (1) "coercion must be confined to role specific relationships"; (2) "coercion must track the truth, its methods must be deployed for the sake of genuine human goods"; (3) "coercion must be tempered with charity, with care for the coerced, and with worry about the negative freedom lost".³¹⁶ Thus, both the feature of Augustine's theology that justified coercion, and the criteria which he used, are consistent with what we have discovered about merciful judgment.

Further, we have seen in this chapter that Augustine saw no contradiction in calling on civil authorities to practice merciful judgment; when they are deciding on punishment, for example, he tries to persuade them to take into account what would still allow the criminal the ability and opportunity to repent. If a civil authority is a Christian, in other words, he ought to put his position at the service of evangelical ends. It is on these same grounds that Augustine would authorize civil authorities who were Christians using coercion to bring the Donatists into the Catholic Church. As Markus notes, with evident regret, "There is no trace of any reservations about the scope of imperial or royal authority in such statements, no suggestion that [coercion] is in any way restricted to temporal matters."³¹⁷ Augustine's use of coercion is the darker side of merciful judgment.³¹⁸

³¹⁴ Robert Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 142-143.

³¹⁵ Markus argues that Augustine's commitment to discipline is consistent throughout his thought, and he detects only two developments: first, the degree to which he was later willing to use severe methods which he had earlier seen as very limited, and, second, "the wider resonances his ideas on disciplina acquired in the course of his reflection on grace, freedom and predestination during his controversy with Pelagianism" (144).

³¹⁶ John R. Bowlin, 'Augustine on Justifying Coercion', *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 17 (1997), 49-70 (pp. 66-67).

³¹⁷ Markus, *Saeculum*, p. 147.

³¹⁸ Certainly contemporary Augustinians reject Augustine's thought and practice on these matters. Contemporary "Augustinian liberals", such as Markus and Eric Gregory (*Politics and the Order of Love*), see in Augustine a failure to properly distinguish civil from ecclesial authority. Though equally in disagreement with Augustine's support of coercion, for John Milbank the problem is not that Augustine was not a good liberal, but

The fourth and final feature of merciful judgment is that it never abandons loving the offender and hoping that he will change. We see this in Augustine's teaching on excommunication. He argues that excommunication can only serve as penance for sin once in a person's lifetime. Certainly this may seem as though love and hope for the offender are abandoned; yet Augustine argues that this penance is only offered once in order to ensure the effectiveness of excommunication as a means of correction: "cheap medicine might become less beneficial for the sick...it will be more salutary to the extent that it is held less in contempt" (Ep153.3.7). Even so, refusal of that means of penance does not mean that the Church teaches the offender that he is beyond salvation and can do as he pleases: "May God prevent such monstrous and sacrilegious insanity" (Ep 153.3.7). Augustine advises that given God's patience, there is still hope: the offender is to trust in God, repent and correct himself, and get busy with works of mercy. And the Church ought to remain steadfast in its care of him as long as God's patience lasts.

In this chapter, then, we have seen that the primary demand when judging others is that we do so mercifully. Being merciful towards others involves taking up our middle place in creation as we attend to others as equals under God and living faithfully in this age as we help to facilitate others' conversion and repentance in preparation for God's final judgment. We also saw that such faithful living in time is a work of the Spirit, who establishes us as pilgrims in this age, to bring us to rest finally in God, maintaining us on that pilgrimage with hope, patience and mercy. We take up judging others as a particular calling in this age, then, but we do so in submission to and faith in the perfection and finality of God's judgment. Having explored judging others, then, we now turn to its necessary (and frequently neglected) partner: judging ourselves.

instead given Augustine's commitment to "the ontological priority of peace over conflict" he should not have supported the use of power to advance Christian goals; see *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1990), pp. 363, 390. For a similar argument see Oliver O'Donovan, *The Desire of the Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Chapter 4:

The Practice of Judgment II: Self-Judgment

“Our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience”

-- 2 Corinthians 1:12

We come, then, in our final chapter, to self-judgment. Here, our middle position is central yet again. Augustine argues that subjecting ourselves to God in love includes examining ourselves alone before God; in our sin, we flee from such self-examination and set our sights on others. In self-judgment, we turn from an often misplaced concern for others to the gruelling work of looking at ourselves. However, even when we do so, we are concerned with our relation to others and the character of our love for them. We turn *from* others, then, to better judge our relation *to* them. Much of this chapter will be devoted to the necessity of solitude for this practice of self-judgment, and how such solitude is possible within our consciences. We will conclude this chapter by showing that the turn inward to our conscience to practice self-judgment is only a temporary turn from our neighbour in order that we can return to them better ordered by love. It is by self-judgment, in other words, that we become properly social. As with our three other chapters, we will explore the role of the Spirit in this particular practice of judgment. We will see that self-judgment depends on the Spirit because (1) it is by the Spirit’s gift of love that we are capable of ordered self-love, which includes self-judgment; (2) the criterion of our self-judgment is whether we discern the Spirit’s love as

the source of our actions or our own lust; (3) by self-judgment we become better able to love our neighbours. We ought to note at the outset that the Spirit's role in self-judgment is not as explicit as the Spirit's role has been in earlier chapters. Of the three aspects that we have just identified, the second is made the most explicit, as we will see; however, it is a clear teaching of Augustine that ordered love is a gift of the Spirit, and so, even when we make connections more explicitly than he did, we still do so on firm Augustinian grounds.

I. Self-Judgment as Ordered Self-Love

As we saw in our last chapter, to judge others mercifully depends on the recognition of their equality with us. As we turn now to self-judgment, there is a further implication to this equality: we ought not to judge others without also judging ourselves. Augustine is acutely aware of how other-judgment all too frequently serves as an excuse to not judge ourselves. As he writes in *Confessions* 10, we “love truth when it enlightens...but hate it when it accuses” us.³¹⁹ He sees this sinful relation to truth at work in the story of the woman caught in adultery in John 8. He notes that Jesus does not dispute that the punishment for adultery is stoning; instead Jesus demands to know whether the self-appointed judges of the case are as rigorous in their self-judgment. The great force of the story for Augustine is that those who come in judgment are confronted by the one true Judge, as Jesus “questioned the questioners, and in this way judged the judges.”³²⁰ While other-judgment is a practice of neighbour-love to which every Christian is called, as we saw in our last chapter, it ought not to function as an especially satisfying and seemingly well-intentioned way to avoid judging ourselves. Other-judgment must always be preceded and accompanied by self-judgment. To do otherwise, Augustine repeatedly reminds us, is to disobey Christ's command to love our neighbour *as ourselves*: “You wish to reprove your neighbour; there is nothing which is a

³¹⁹ *conf.* 10.23.34.

³²⁰ *s.* 13.4.

nearer neighbor to you than yourself. Why go far away...if you don't love yourself, how can you love your neighbour?"³²¹ Ultimately, then, to judge others without judging ourselves indicates a disordered self-love in which we shield ourselves from the truth. We are not loving our neighbour "as ourselves", if we refuse to engage in self-judgment; Indeed, we are rejecting our equality with them.

Especially significant for us is that in three later texts (*A Handbook on Faith, Hope and Love* [421-422], *City* 21 [427] and *Sermon* 106³²²) Augustine argues that self-judgment belongs to an ordered self-love, specifically in terms of what it means to be merciful to oneself. This argument certainly fits with Augustine's desire to hold mercy and judgment together. He is also responding to a pastoral necessity: we see in two of these texts, *Handbook* and *City of God* 21, that Augustine has become aware that some, perhaps having misinterpreted his teaching on works of mercy, believe that by giving generous alms they attain a kind of pre-emptive forgiveness for sins they intend to continue to commit. Augustine's response to this involves the necessary equality between self and other: you cannot be merciful to others and not be merciful to yourself. Just as mercy to others consists in attending to them as equals, mercy to myself consists in loving myself as I love others.

Augustine devotes the lengthy final chapter of Book 21 of *City* to refuting the position of those who believe that works of mercy are enough to save them from hell. We need not rehearse all the features of the argument here. Most notably, for our purposes, he does refer at one point to how we must love our neighbours as ourselves:

Therefore, anyone who wishes to perform acts of mercy worthy of his sins must first begin with himself. For it is unworthy not to do for oneself what one does for one's neighbour, since we hear God say, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'; and, again, we hear, 'Have mercy on thy soul, and please God' (Sirach 30:23). How, then, can he who does not have mercy on his own soul--that is, who does not please God--

³²¹ s. 387.2.

³²² This sermon has yet to be dated, though I argue below for a date.

be said to perform works of mercy worthy of his sins? In the same vein, it is written, 'He that is wicked to himself, to whom will he be good?' (Eccle 14:5).³²³

The fundamental contradiction is that between being merciful to others and not being merciful to oneself; we are not merciful to ourselves if we use works of mercy in order to keep on sinning, blithely assuming we have secured God's forgiveness. It is especially noteworthy that Augustine pairs the command to love our neighbour with the definition of self-mercy in Sirach. To be merciful to others as you are to yourself, then, consists in making yourself pleasing to God by turning from sin, not devising strategies to keep God content while you go on sinning. Self-love is defined, then, both in terms of an equal relation to others and subjection to God.

In *Handbook* and Sermon 106, Augustine puts an even finer point on self-mercy by arguing that it must *begin* with self-judgment. He does so by pairing Sirach 30:23 with neighbor-love and, in a further addition not present in *City* 21, Jesus' criticism that the Pharisees neglect "judgment and love" (Luke 11:42)³²⁴: "What does [Jesus] mean by 'Give alms?' Show mercy. What's the meaning of 'Show mercy'? If you really understand that, begin with yourself...Listen to Scripture: 'Have mercy on your soul pleasing God' (Sirach 30:23)."³²⁵ When he comes to explain why Jesus identifies judgment and love with the alms neglected by the Pharisees, Augustine argues, first, that judgment refers to self-judgment: "Take a look and discover yourself; be displeased with yourself, pronounce judgment on yourself"; and, second, that the love is love of God and neighbour: "Love the Lord God with your whole heart, and your whole soul, and your whole mind; love your neighbour as

³²³ *civ. Dei* 21.27 (CCSL 48:801): "Qui ergo dignas pro suis peccatis elemosynas facit, prius eas facere incipiat a se ipso. Indignum est enim, ut in se non faciat, qui facit in proximum, cum audiat dicentem Deum: Diliges proximum tuum tamquam te ipsum; itemque audiat: Miserere animae tuae placens Deo. Hanc elemosynam, id est, ut Deo placeat, non faciens animae suae quomodo dignas pro peccatis suis elemosynas facere dicendus est? Ad hoc enim et illud scriptum est: Qui sibi malignus est, cui bonus erit?"

³²⁴ It does appear elsewhere, especially in relation to the Donatists; see *ep.* 173.1, 247.2, *s.* 161.6, 87.9.11, *c. Jul. imp.* 2.235.

³²⁵ *s.* 106.4.

yourself; and then you have given alms first to your soul.” The Pharisees, then, have been observant in terms of mercy towards others, but have neglected self-mercy; their souls, Augustine writes, are begging at the door, desperately in need of being fed. This poor beggar who can’t even feed himself is in contrast with the lavish tithing of the Pharisees who give seemingly generously of all that they have. This striking image indicates the contradiction in practicing other-mercy apart from self-mercy. In order to recognize our own need for mercy, we must judge ourselves to see how miserable we are: “Your soul is begging at the door...” (S 106.4).³²⁶

Augustine’s exposition of “judgment and love” in Luke 11:42 is more fully worked out in *Handbook*. As in *City* 21, we see Augustine devote an extended argument in *Handbook* to refuting incorrect interpretations of works of mercy.³²⁷ In one such passage, judgment and love are paired three times, as we enumerate below, to define self-mercy:

For the man who wishes to give alms as he ought, should begin with himself, and give to himself first... This is our first alms, which we give to ourselves when, through the mercy of a pitying God, we find that we are ourselves wretched, and confess the (1) justice of His judgment by which we are made wretched, of which the apostle says, ‘The judgment was by one to condemnation’ (Romans 5:16) and praise the greatness of His love, of which the same preacher of grace says, ‘God commends his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us’ (Romans 5:8) and thus (2) judging truly of our own misery, and loving God with the love which He has Himself bestowed, we lead a holy and virtuous life. But the Pharisees, while they give as alms the tithe of all their fruits, even the most insignificant, passed over (3) judgment and the love of God, and so did not commence their almsgiving at home, and extend their pity to themselves in the first instance (Luke 11:42). And it is in reference to this order of love that it is said, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’.³²⁸

³²⁶ Given that Augustine only combines Sirach 30:23 and Luke 11:42 in *ench.* and s.106, we have grounds for suggesting that Sermon 106 was likely given around the same time as Augustine was writing *ench.* (421-422). In so doing, we have an approximate date for a sermon that scholars have thus far been stumped by; see ATA p. p. 777.

³²⁷ This verse appears rarely in Augustine’s corpus and seems to have come to his attention rather late; Luke 11:41 (“So give for alms those things that are within; and see, everything will be clean for you”) does appear when he discusses works of mercy (see *en. Ps.* 44.27, *en. Ps.* 125.5, s. 261.10.10). Perhaps Augustine returned to this passage thinking about self-mercy and Luke 11:42 jumped out with new relevance.

³²⁸ *ench.* 20.76 (CCSL 46: 90-91): “Qui enim uult ordinate dare eleemosynam a se ipso debet incipere et eam sibi primum dare. Est enim eleemosyna opus misericordiae, uerissimeque dictum est: *Miserere animae tuae placens Deo*. Propter hoc renascimur, ut deo placeamus, cui merito displicet quod nascendo contraximus. Haec est prima eleemosyna quam nobis dedimus, quoniam nos ipsos miseros per miserantis dei misericordiam requisuimus, iustum iudicium eius confitentes quo miseri effecti sumus, de quo dicit apostolus: *Iudicium quidem ex uno in condemnationem*, et magnae caritati eius gratias agentes, de qua idem ipse dicit gratiae praedicator: *Commendat autem suam caritatem Deus in nobis quoniam adhuc cum peccatores essemus Christus*

While the reference to Jesus' criticism of the Pharisees' alms comes late in this passage, we see that the relation between judgment and love defines self-mercy. (1) Judgment and love are first mentioned as features of the divine activity. Our judgment and love are responses to, and derivative of, God's judgment and love, specifically God's judgment on Adam's disobedience and his love towards humanity, shown in Christ's dying for sinners. (2) Our response to that divine activity is to judge ourselves to recognise our misery and to love God with the love which he has given to us, that is, an implicit reference to the Holy Spirit. With this understanding of alms, then, the fundamental work of mercy which precedes and underlies all others is conversion and repentance. (3) Those who give alms apart from self-mercy, then, are like the Pharisees whom Jesus criticises so harshly. We see that the quotation of Sirach and the neighbour-command have been integrated into this refrain of "judgment and love."

We ought also to note one further feature of this passage: Augustine specifies that we only respond to God's judgment of us and love for us with self-judgment and love of God as a result of "the mercy of a pitying God". We saw in the last chapter that Augustine is clear that our capacity for mercy is a result of the Spirit's work in us; in *Handbook* he is further specifying that the self-judgment involved in self-mercy is also a result of God's work. In the next chapter of *Handbook* Augustine makes this same point again:

Now he who loves iniquity hates his own soul; and he who hates his own soul is not merciful but cruel towards it. For in loving it according to the world, he hates it according to God. But if he desired to give alms to it which should make all things clean unto him, he would hate it according to the world, and love it according to God. Now no one gives alms unless he receives what he gives from one who is not in want of it. Therefore it is said, 'His mercy shall meet me'.³²⁹

pro nobis mortuus est, ut et nos ueraciter de nostra miseria iudicantes, et deum caritate quam donauit ipse diligentes, pie recteque uiuamus. Quod iudicium et caritatem dei cum pharisaei praeterirent, decimabant quidem propter eleemosynas quas faciebant etiam quaecumque minutissima fructuum suorum, et ideo non dabant eleemosynas a se incipientes secumque prius misericordiam facientes. Propter quem dilectionis ordinem dictum est: Diliges proximum tuum tamquam te ipsum."

³²⁹ *ench.* 20.77 (CCSL 46:91): "Non ergo se fallant qui per eleemosynas quaslibet largissimas fructuum suorum vel cuiuscumque pecuniae impunitatem se emere existimant in facinorum immanitate ac flagitiorum nequitia

To love myself in such a way that I strategize about how to keep sinning is to love myself according to the world, but to hate myself according to God. Most importantly for us is that Augustine further notes that the works of mercy we perform are possible only because God's mercy "meets" us. We see clearly that self-judgment belongs to self-mercy, and that such mercy is a result of God working in us. Specifically as Augustine said in the passage above, self-judgment comes as a result of "loving God with the love which He has Himself bestowed." In other words, this is an implicit reference to the Holy Spirit.

II. The Criterion of Self-Judgment

Self-judgment is, then, a practice of ordered-self-love that comes by the Spirit's work in us. We can further specify that a consistent criterion of self-judgment is whether or not we are ordered by love. Whereas, as we saw in the last chapter, other-judgment focuses on others' actions and what we can rightfully infer from those actions, with self-judgment the focus is on what lies behind *our* actions: are our actions motivated by lust or by love? In descriptions of self-judgment, as we will see, applying the criterion of ordered-love includes discerning whether we act on the basis of the Spirit's love or our own lust. We will demonstrate this with reference to three texts: *Confessions* 10 (ca. 400), *Tractates on the First Letter of John* (406/407), and *Tractates on the Gospel of Saint John* (414).

Undoubtedly the finest example we have of a description of self-judgment in Augustine's corpus is a text we have already treated at length in our second chapter, *Confessions* 10. We examined it earlier in terms of Augustine's self-judgment according to the triad of 1 John 2:16. For our present purposes, what is especially relevant is how the self-

permanendi. Non solum enim haec faciunt, sed ita diligunt ut in eis semper optent, tantum si possint impune, versari. Qui autem diligit iniquitatem odit animam suam, et qui odit animam suam non est in eam misericors sed crudelis. Diligendo eam quippe secundum saeculum odit secundum Deum. Si ergo vellet ei dare eleemosynam per quam illi essent munda omnia, odisset eam secundum saeculum et diligeret secundum Deum. Nemo autem dat eleemosynam qualemlibet, nisi unde det ab illo accipiat qui non eget: ideo dictum est: Misericordia eius praeveniet me."

judgment is structured as an ascent from creation to the neighbour; or, as Augustine also terms it, from continence to justice. As we are ordered by love in our relation to creation, our neighbour can come more fully into view; this space in which the neighbour appears is a consequence of the Spirit's love ordering us to make us capable of loving others as creatures under God. This ascent is clearly made possible, as we argued in our earlier discussion of this text in chapter two, by the Spirit. Augustine begins his self-judgment by defining continence and praying to God, with pneumatological language, to make him continent:

By continence the scattered elements of the self are collected and brought back into the unity from which we have slid away into dispersion; for anyone who loves something else along with you, but does not love it for your sake, loves you less. O Love, ever burning, never extinguished, O Charity, my God, set me on fire! You command continence: give what you command, and then command whatever you will.³³⁰

Whatever we love, then, we are to love *propter* God. Augustine is clearly praying to the Spirit to order his loves.

Such ordering occurs both by continence (restraining our loves) and justice (bestowing our love on others). An especially helpful example of incontinence is given as the last of our senses which Augustine considers under lust of the flesh: sight. On the one hand he praises craftsmen for creating objects with a beauty that reflects God's own Beauty; on the other hand, these beautiful objects are not at the service of what is "necessary or useful" (10.34.53). In other words, the value that the craftsmen and their admirers attribute to the crafts is independent of the place given to them in God's creation; the crafts' value is not *propter* God. The incontinence in this example lies in the fact that they love as an end in itself what they ought only to use. To judge whether one is continent, then, is to evaluate what value my love responds to and what it intends.

When it comes to our fellow human beings, though, it is not only a matter of

³³⁰ conf. 10.29.40 (CCSL 27: 176): "Per continentiam quippe colligimur et redigimur in unum, a quo in multa defluximus. Minus enim te amat qui tecum aliquid amat, quod non propter te amat. O amor, qui semper ardes et numquam exstingueris, caritas, Deus meus, accende me! Continentiam iubes: da quod iubes et iube quod uis."

continence but also of justice “which requires us to bestow [our love] on certain others; and you have willed that our charity should be directed not to you alone but also to our neighbor” (10.37.61). As we saw in our second chapter, Augustine focuses his judgment on his love of praise. Crucially, he says that when he appreciates others’ praise, it should not be on his own account (*propter me*), but on the neighbour’s account (*propter proximi*) (10.37.62). In other words, Augustine ought to value the praise the neighbour gives him because it indicates his neighbour’s own capacity to recognize some good in him. Augustine’s possession of some praise-worthy good ought to be of secondary importance to the good the neighbour recognizes. What Augustine ought to love, then, is not that his ego is being stroked, but instead that the neighbour displays a virtue. A love of the neighbour’s virtue is a love that values the neighbour as reflecting some admirable feature as a creature of God. Such a love would be a just love.

In his self-judgment in *Confessions* 10, then, Augustine is following the movement of the Spirit within him, beginning with his relation to creation and ending with his relation to his neighbour. He gives thanks for what continence he has developed, and he despairs at his failures to be just. By self-judgment he sought to gain clarity on how the Spirit is at work in him, and how he remains still enslaved to lust.

In *Tractates on the First Letter of John* (406/407), we see again that self-judgment is concerned primarily with love of neighbour, and here the Spirit’s transformative work is also clearly in view. Augustine argues that impressive good can be done out of love or lust; frequently based on the action alone, as we also saw Augustine emphasize in our last chapter, we cannot discern the difference between these two. We must judge ourselves to see whether we are obeying the command to love each other. This crucial passage is worth quoting at length:

...you see [from the epistle] that no other thing is bidden us than that we love one another...And in this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has given

us. Is it not manifest that this is what the Holy Spirit works in man, that there should be in him love and charity? Is it not manifest, as the Apostle Paul says, that ‘the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given us’ (Romans 5:5)? For he was speaking of charity, and was saying that we ought in the sight of God to interrogate our own heart. ‘But if our heart think not ill of us’ that is, if it confess that from the love of our brother is done in us whatever is done in any good work. And then besides, in speaking of the commandment, he says this: ‘This is His commandment, That we should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment.’ ‘And he that does His commandment abides in Him, and He in him. In this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which he has given us’. If in truth you find that you have charity, you have the Spirit of God in order to understand: for a very necessary thing it is.³³¹

We see, then, as we did with *Confessions* 10, that a central question of self-judgment is whether we act out of love for our neighbour. Further, Augustine specifies that if we do love in this way, we have discerned the Spirit’s presence. His quotation of Romans 5:5 serves to prove that when we love we do so by the Spirit, and Augustine here further takes Paul’s reference to “hearts” to refer to the need to “interrogate our own heart”. Thus we judge ourselves in order to follow, as it were, the pouring of that love. The final sentence of this passage develops a point Augustine had initially introduced in an earlier homily on the Epistle when interpreting 1 John 1:26-27: “As for you, the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and so you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, abide in him.” Augustine takes this “anointing” to refer to the inward presence of the Holy Spirit to Christians: “the invisible anointing is the Holy Spirit; the invisible anointing is that charity, which, in whomsoever it be, shall be as a root to him: however burning the sun, he cannot wither. All that is rooted is nourished by the sun’s warmth, not withered” (3.12). Part of what

³³¹ *ep. Jo. 6.9* (PL 35): “videtis quia nihil aliud nobis praecipitur, nisi ut diligamus invicem...Nonne manifestum est quia hoc agit Spiritus sanctus in homine, ut sit in illo dilectio et caritas? Nonne manifestum est quod ait apostolus Paulus: *Caritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per Spiritum sanctum qui datus est nobis*? De caritate enim loquebatur, et dicebat quia in conspectu Dei debemus interrogare cor nostrum. *Quod si non male senserit cor nostrum*: id est, si confiteatur quia de dilectione fratris fit, quidquid fit in bono opere. Accessit etiam quod de mandato cum diceret, hoc ait: *Hoc est mandatum eius, ut credamus nomini Filii eius Iesu Christi, et diligamus invicem. Et qui facit mandatum eius, in ipso manet, et ipse in eo. In hoc cognoscimus quia manet in nobis de Spiritu quem dedit nobis*. Si enim inveneris te habere caritatem, habes Spiritum Dei ad intellegendum: valde enim necessaria res est.”

the Holy Spirit teaches, then, is that the Holy Spirit dwells within us. Self-judgment is not only recognition of our sinfulness but also a witnessing of the way we are being transformed by the Spirit.

We saw in *Confessions* 10 that when Augustine came to evaluate whether or not he loved his neighbour, the key question was whether he loved her *propter* God. To continue with his sixth homily on the Epistle of John, we see that neighbour-love is defined in particularly ecclesial terms; I suggest that this ecclesial specificity in neighbour-love corresponds to *propter* God in *Confessions* 10. I am to love my neighbour not based merely on his particular relation to me, but also as a member, whether potentially or actually, of the Church.³³² Thus, in further developing how we discern whether we love others' by the Spirit, Augustine turns to the story of Pentecost. He is applying his familiar argument that the speaking in tongues at Pentecost foreshadowed how Christianity would spread throughout the world and the Church would be made up of people of all languages. Yet, he notes, we do not now detect the Spirit's presence according to whether or not another speaks in tongues. Instead the story of Pentecost combined with the command to love one another gives particular ecclesial content to that love: "If he loves his brother the Spirit of God dwells in him. Let him see, let him prove himself before the eyes of God, let him see whether there be in him the love of peace and unity, the love of the Church that is spread over the whole earth" (6.10). The love of my brother, then, is taken to include as a necessary feature the maintenance of the unity and stability of the church. Augustine further develops this ecclesial side to the love of brethren by including those brethren that we do not see; that is, that love is to include the Church spread throughout the world" (6.10). Thus, this ecclesial definition of neighbour-love both indicates that I am to be loving my neighbour as an actual or potential member of the church, that is, as belonging to the people of God, and, second, it also points

³³² This also allows Augustine to develop neighbour-love in a way that fits with his anti-Donatist polemic.

my love beyond my own neighbour-hood to the need for my love to support the Church as a universal unity.

We see the relation between self-judgment and the movement of the Spirit's life, given to us and then shared with others, detailed especially vividly in Augustine's commentary on Christ's image of the Spirit as "living waters" in the Gospel of John. In the 32nd of his *Tractates on the Gospel of John* (414), Augustine writes:

The Lord, therefore, cries aloud to us to come and drink, if we thirst within; and He says that when we have drunk, rivers of living water shall flow from our belly. The belly of the inner man is the conscience of the heart. Having drunk that water then, the conscience being purged begins to live; and drinking in, it will have a fountain, will be itself a fountain. What is the fountain, and what the river that flows from the belly of the inner man? Benevolence whereby a man will consult the interest of his neighbour. For if he imagines that what he drinks ought to be only for his own satisfying, there is no flowing of living water from his belly; but if he is quick to consult for the good of his neighbour, then he becomes not dry, because there is a flowing...if we believe, we drink. And it is every man's duty to know in himself whether or not he drinks, and whether he lives by what he drinks; for the fountain does not forsake us if we forsake not the fountain. The evangelist explained, as I have said, whereof the Lord had cried out, to what kind of drink He had invited, what He had procured for them that drink, saying, 'But this spoke he of the Spirit...' What spirit does He speak of, if not the Holy Spirit?³³³

The central image in this passage is that of the Spirit becoming a fountain in us with the result that we, too, become a fountain. We ought to note that while the image of the Spirit as "living waters" within the believer is explicit in the text, Augustine himself is interpreting the 'flow' of these waters in terms of in neighbor-love. The Spirit's activity does not terminate with us, as the Spirit is given to us in order that we might give. It is also the case that Augustine uses this passage as an occasion to call us to self-judgment. Again, we see that the reference to the Spirit in the text has provoked Augustine to connect it with self-judgment, as the text itself

³³³ *Jo. ev. tr.* 32.4 (PL 35): "Clamat ergo Dominus ut veniamus et bibamus, si intus sitiamus; et dicit quia cum biberimus, flumina aquae vivae fluent de ventre nostro. Venter interioris hominis conscientia cordis est. Bibito ergo isto liquore vivescit purgata conscientia; et hauriens, fontem habebit; etiam ipsa fons erit. Quid est fons, et quid est fluvius qui manat de ventre interioris hominis? Benevolentia, qua vult consulere proximo. Si enim putet quia quod bibit soli ipsi debet sufficere; non fluit aqua viva de ventre eius: si autem proximo festinat consulere; ideo non siccat, quia manat. Videbimus nunc quid sit quod bibunt, qui credunt in Domino; quia utique Christiani sumus, et si credimus, bibimus. Et unusquisque in seipso debet agnoscere si bibit, et si vivit ex eo quod bibit: non enim nos deserit fons, si non deseramus fontem."

does not develop in that direction: “it is every man’s duty to know himself whether or not he drinks, and whether he lives by what he drinks.” The flowing of the Spirit is the basis for our self-judgment as we are to detect whether or not we receive love from God and whether or not that love is passed on.³³⁴

We have seen, then, how self-judgment is a feature of ordered self-love, and how its very criterion is whether we are ordered by the Spirit’s love or by lust. In the execution of this self-judgment Augustine repeatedly refers to conscience. Many of the texts we have considered above include this connection between self-judgment and conscience. In his discussion of disordered self-love which excludes God from one’s life, Augustine includes “ignoring their consciences.”³³⁵ The Pharisees, then, who “neglect judgment and love” have done so by “ignoring” the “examination of a good conscience...instead they washed what was outside, [while] inside remained utterly defiled.”³³⁶ When commenting on the story of the woman caught in adultery, Augustine describes how Jesus’ questions to the Pharisees “pricked [their] consciences”³³⁷ and they gave up wanting to stone the woman because they were “restrained by conscience.”³³⁸ This is especially clear in the homily we quoted on the Epistle of John. When judging oneself he advises, “Let us come back then to conscience...Therefore, let each one of us ‘prove his own work’ whether it flow from the vein of charity, whether it be from charity as the root that his good works sprout as branches...not

³³⁴ The image of the Spirit as living waters that flow and form further fountains recurs throughout Augustine’s work. Indeed, in addition to the clear texts in John 4 and 7 that picture the Spirit as living waters, Augustine even sees water in the ‘pouring’ (*diffundere*) of his beloved Romans 5:5 (see *en. Ps.* 103-1.9, 118-10.6, 77.13). Though he does specify that water does not always represent the Spirit (he specifies alternate possibilities in *doc. Chr.* 3.24.36, *ep. Jo.* 6.11, s. 6.8). He uses the image especially to describe the process of evangelism (see *en. Ps.* 67.35, 92.7, s. 239.1, *conf.* 13.13.14) and the gift of love (see *ep. Jo.* 6.11, *ep. Jo.* 7.6, *conf.* 13.17.21, *en. Ps.* 103-1.9). We note two references in the *Jo. ev. tr.* to the Spirit as the “fountain of love” which both unites Father and Son in the Trinity and Christians in the Church (18.4, 39.5). The image, then, points to how the giving of the Spirit to an individual is inseparable from its being given again.

³³⁵ s. 330.3.

³³⁶ s. 106.1.

³³⁷ s. 302.14.

³³⁸ s. 13.5.

when another's tongue bears witness to him, but when his conscience bears it."³³⁹ While it is certainly the case that the Epistle calls its readers to self-examination, it is Augustine who explicates this in terms of conscience. If we are to understand the practice of self-judgment, then, we must understand Augustine's conception of conscience.

III. Self-Judgment and 'Conscientia'

There has been surprisingly little scholarly work done on Augustine's conception of conscience. This neglect is evident in the lack of an entry on it in the generally comprehensive *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*. Only two articles, to my knowledge, focus on the subject: Mary T. Clark's short 'Augustine on Conscience'³⁴⁰ and Ernest L. Fortin's 'The Political Implications of St. Augustine's Theory of Conscience.'³⁴¹ Clark's essay identifies Augustine as formative on the Western conception of conscience; she includes such features as "its universality, its origin with the use of reason, its reliability regarding normative precepts of right and wrong...its causing the experience of guilt after sin and joy after right action, its participation in the Eternal or natural law given by God...and therefore its binding character" (66). Her paper provides a helpful overview of key issues, but is too short to consider the subject in depth. Fortin takes Augustine's conception of conscience to be revolutionary in giving "man's moral life...an objective autonomy that it did not have for any of Augustine's pagan predecessors" (p.143). The result is that "civil society is displaced as the locus of virtue and the object of man's deepest and most noble attachments. Its wholeness is shattered" (p.145). It seems to me this overstates the case; one need only look to Sophocles, Cicero or Plotinus for a strong sense of our moral life having an "objective autonomy." Instead what is distinctive about Augustine, and what Fortin and Clark both neglect, is conscience as a kind of interior space in which we can interrogate ourselves

³³⁹ *ep. Jo.* 6.2; see also 6.4, 6.6.

³⁴⁰ In *Studia Patristica* 33 (1995), ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 63-67.

³⁴¹ In *Augustinian Studies*, 1 (1970), 133-155.

before God about the order of our loves. Thus we see in Augustine's conception of conscience the coming together of his account of interiority with his influential emphasis on love as the centre of Christian ethics.³⁴²

Before we turn to Augustine's conception of conscience, we ought to briefly indicate some sense of the history of the term. We do not have the space, or the need, to delve deeply into the etymological and theoretical complexities of this history. Richard Sorabji offers us a brief sketch of conscience prior to the Patristic period that gives an overview that will suffice for our purposes:

The idea of conscience started in ancient Greek thought as the idea of awareness of one's own fault or weakness, then of one's own faultlessness and even, especially in Roman texts, of one's own merit. The expression used for conscience also covered the idea of awareness of the fault, faultlessness, or merit. Although there was an idea of right or wrong in general, and indeed of a natural law of right or wrong, it was not directly connected with expressions of conscience. Saint Paul was innovating, then, when he connected an expression for conscience closely with the idea of a general *law* of right and wrong.³⁴³

The centrality of conscience to Christian moral thinking, then, owes much to Saint Paul, who himself may have picked up the term from his correspondence with Corinthians on the question of whether or not to eat meat sacrificed to idols.³⁴⁴ In the Pauline literature, according to O'Donovan, 'conscience' is used in three ways which reflect the word's earlier history: (1) "as a *noun of action*, meaning 'awareness'", for example awareness of God 1 Peter 2:19; (2) "as a verbal noun, 'self-awareness,' and especially moral self-awareness", for example self-awareness of guilt; and (3) as a "settled moral relation to oneself, a moral character", for example a "good" conscience in 1 Timothy 1:19.³⁴⁵ Henry Chadwick also notes that the centrality of conscience in Paul "confers freedom, a deliverance from excessive

³⁴² Though certainly earlier Patristic authors also emphasized interiority; as a prominent example, no doubt influential on Augustine, we take Ambrose, who writes: "The prophet David taught us that we should walk about in our heart as though we are in a spacious house, and commune with it as we would with a good companion" (*De officiis* 3.1, trans. Ivor J. Davidson).

³⁴³ 'Graeco-Roman Origins of the Idea of Moral Conscience', *Studia Patristica*, 44 (2010), 361-383.

³⁴⁴ C. A. Pierce, *Conscience in the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1955), p. 109.

³⁴⁵ O'Donovan, *Ways of Judgment* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), p.303.

scruple and joyless fussiness about detailed prescriptions” yet with that freedom is also “the obligation to always act in love and respect for other members of the community.”³⁴⁶ This Pauline innovation will be determinative for Augustine.

Some Patristic examples will be useful in establishing how Augustine develops this tradition. Sorabji, as we have seen, emphasizes that Paul is also innovative in connecting this “moral self-awareness” with “the law written in the hearts of men” as in Romans 1. This innovation “licenses the Church Fathers to make extremely close connections between conscience and that inner law.”³⁴⁷ Thus, to draw a few examples from Patristic authors, Tertullian refers to conscience as our sense of duty,³⁴⁸ which, while more refined among Christians, belongs to all.³⁴⁹ Chrysostom refers to human beings as having two instructors, creation without and conscience within;³⁵⁰ Basil calls it the “natural tribunal of judgment”;³⁵¹ Origen writes that conscience is God’s law written in our hearts;³⁵² and Ambrose argues that our conscience foreshadows God’s verdict at the last judgment.³⁵³ Further, Ambrose suggests that it is by conscience that we can act not according to others’ opinions, but we can follow instead “the witness of [the] heart” which is a “trustworthy companion.”³⁵⁴ We will see that Augustine draws on this long history of both pagan and Christian thinking in his own conception of conscience. As is so often the case with Augustine, however, his creative synthesis also offers something new; for with him conscience becomes an essential tool in ordering our loves, especially at the service of neighbour-love. We now turn to Augustine

³⁴⁶ Henry Chadwick, ‘Conscience in Ancient Thought’, in *Studies on Ancient Christianity* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), Chapter XX (p.36).

³⁴⁷ Sorabji, ‘Moral Conscience’, p. 379.

³⁴⁸ *adv. Herm.* 1, *adv. Valent.* 1.

³⁴⁹ *apol.* 22.29.

³⁵⁰ *hom. in Rom.* 5.

³⁵¹ *hom. in princ. Prov.* 9.

³⁵² *hom. in Jeremiah* 16.10.

³⁵³ *Expl. Ps.* 1.20.

³⁵⁴ *De officiis* 1.5.18, 3.1.

First we must establish the lexical range of *conscientia* in Augustine.³⁵⁵ At its most general, it is roughly equivalent to our words ‘consciousness’ and ‘self-consciousness’. It can be used to indicate the direction of our attention, as the humble tax-collector who did not “dare to lift his consciousness to God (*non audebat conscientiam levare ad Deum*)”,³⁵⁶ or what we have in mind when acting, as in “the consciousness of pleasing God (*habere conscientiam placendi Deo*).”³⁵⁷ The adjectival form (*consci*) corresponds to this more general meaning of being ‘conscious’ or ‘aware’ of something, as, for example, Augustine uses it to describe John the Baptist’s awareness of the weakness he shared with all humanity (*consci* *communis infirmitas ait*).³⁵⁸ My ‘consciousness’ is known partly by me and only fully by God.³⁵⁹ It is contrasted with what is perceivable by others: including our speech,³⁶⁰ our face³⁶¹ and our actions.³⁶² In communication with one another this privacy of our consciousness presents a constant challenge. As, for example, when another thinks I am lying, I have no way of demonstrating to him that what I am saying is indeed what I think, because I cannot “open” to him my “inner thoughts where God alone is witness.”³⁶³ Thus true intimacy would involve not just knowing another’s body, but his consciousness.³⁶⁴

As opposed to this more general meaning of ‘conscientia’ as ‘consciousness’, there is the more specific sense which is similar to our ‘conscience’. We are reserving this latter term for our *moral* self-consciousness; that is, when consciousness is engaged specifically in approval or disapproval of our actions and thoughts. As above, when Augustine described how the Pharisees ‘conscience’ was ‘pricked’ by Jesus’ question regarding their innocence.

³⁵⁵ This analysis is based on a word-search of all the appearances of ‘conscientia’ and its cognates in Augustine’s sermons and letters.

³⁵⁶ *s.* 60A.4.

³⁵⁷ *s.* 149.12.

³⁵⁸ *s.* 293.12; see also *s.* 293.7, 145.3, *epp.* 23.1, 119.2.

³⁵⁹ *s.* 12.3, 14.4, 30.3, *epp.* 144.5, 153.19, 144.3.

³⁶⁰ *s.* 14.7, 83.7, 227, 256.1.

³⁶¹ *ep.* 267, *s.* 243.5.

³⁶² *s.* 47.11.

³⁶³ *s.* 12.3.

³⁶⁴ *ep.* 267.

Jesus' question caused them to recognize their own awareness of sinful actions for which they could rightly be judged. Our terms 'consciousness' and 'conscience' divide what is related in the Latin 'conscientia'. The relation is surely not difficult to discern, for my evaluations ('conscience') are an object and activity of my awareness ('consciousness'). Indeed, as we have seen already, it is central to Augustine's understanding of human beings that we are always involved in making judgments. Thus 'conscience' is a function of our having evaluative 'consciousnesses'. We judge, for example, whether a building is beautiful, if a friend is telling the truth; and, equally, we judge ourselves. Such judgments are grounded in God's on-going communicative activity. In *Sermon* 12, in a discussion of all the ways that God communicates to human beings, Augustine includes "in the conscience of good and bad people alike." He goes on to explain that "none can rightly approve their good actions or disapprove their sins without that voice of truth either praising or condemning to the same effect in the silence of the heart."³⁶⁵ That all are constantly judging what they do, Augustine takes as not requiring argument; the point he believes needs support is that this very activity is the result of God's communication with us.

With this brief lexical survey, the role of 'conscience' in self-judgment comes into clearer focus. We are created with a law "written in our conscience... [which] forbids us to do to another what we would not have done to ourselves."³⁶⁶ Elsewhere Augustine refers to this 'law' as the "natural law" or the "law of nature" which is "written in [the] heart."³⁶⁷ With conscience, then, the objective order of creation meets each individual in their subjectivity. This 'law' is inherent to our nature, and therefore 'deeper' than, for example, the rules of grammar.³⁶⁸ The recognition of this law comes as we grow up and develop our inherent capacity to reason. It is because of the knowledge of this law that, as Paul writes in Romans,

³⁶⁵ s. 12.3.

³⁶⁶ *conf.* 1.18.29.

³⁶⁷ *ep.* 157.15, *Jo. ev. tr.* 49.12.

³⁶⁸ *conf.* 1.18.29.

God can hold all human beings responsible for wrong-doing.³⁶⁹ And this knowledge is present in all, in spite of their depravity. Augustine provides the compelling example of the thief who hates being robbed, even if he is rich. The thief's wealth indicates that his (hypocritical) hatred of robbery arises from his awareness of the natural law, and not primarily from the robbery's consequences--as might be the case if he were poor.³⁷⁰ Thus Augustine consoles his congregants that though it may seem that the immoral are living happy lives, they "carry their punishment with them"; anyone who does wrong "suffers the torments of his conscience in the inner chamber of his heart."³⁷¹ Such punishments are part of the "natural order of justice" which, Augustine argues, "requires either that sin should not be committed or that it should not go unpunished." If committed, "sin pains the conscience."³⁷²

How does Augustine describe this 'pain'? The most common description is of our conscience being 'pricked' or of itself 'pricking (*pungere*)'.³⁷³ This verb describes the sense of wrong doing as a frequent nuisance. This corresponds nicely with an image Augustine uses to describe a guilty conscience: that of a nagging wife.³⁷⁴ In more severe cases, Augustine describes our conscience as 'tormented' (*tortorem conscientiae suae*),³⁷⁵ 'wounded' (*sauciamque gerenti conscientiam*)³⁷⁶ and 'bloodstained' (*cruentam conscientiam*).³⁷⁷ These other descriptors no longer present the 'conscience' as a nagging wife; instead, the better image is that of an enemy within.³⁷⁸ Yet both images indicate the result of a guilty conscience: a sense of oneself as divided, and of a conflict within; our moral self-

³⁶⁹ *ep.* 157.15, *Jo. ev. tr.* 49.12; see also *s. Dom. mon.* 2.9.32, *en. Ps.* 57.4, *spir. et litt.* 28.49.

³⁷⁰ *conf.* 2.4.9.

³⁷¹ *s.* 180.7.8.

³⁷² *c. Faust.* 26.3.

³⁷³ *s.* 99.3, 89.1, 208.2, 350.3, 37.10, 99.3, 89.1, 208.2, 350.3.

³⁷⁴ *en. Ps.* 33-2.8.

³⁷⁵ *s.* 180.8.

³⁷⁶ *s.* 82.11; see also *s.* 154.12.

³⁷⁷ *s.* 82.11; see also *s.* 34.3.

³⁷⁸ *ep.* 73.10.

consciousness is pulled two ways, as it cannot fully attend to what is immediately present to it, but it is also dominated by the awareness of some wrong doing.

The most common adjective used to describe the opposite of a guilty conscience is simply a ‘good’ (*bona*) one.³⁷⁹ Whereas awareness of wrong doing ‘pricks’ and ‘torments’ us, Augustine frequently describes how a ‘good’ conscience is ‘calm’ (*tranquillo*)³⁸⁰ and ‘clear’ (*candidus*)³⁸¹ allowing us to get some sleep! Unlike a bad conscience, which is wounded and bloody, a good one is clean (*purus*)³⁸² and ‘healthy’ (*sanitas*).³⁸³ A good conscience is like a bedroom where we may find rest³⁸⁴ or a desert retreat where we may enjoy solitude with God.³⁸⁵ Similarly, Augustine frequently compares our ‘conscience’ to a safe or strongbox where we can store our true riches (most often faith, hope and love and certain virtues) such that they are inaccessible to others.³⁸⁶ Whereas a bad conscience is described as a nagging wife or aggressive enemy, indicating a lack of space within, a good conscience is peaceful and roomy--like a private, safe haven where I can retreat and commune with God.

IV. Interpretations of Augustinian ‘Interiority’

Before proceeding to consider further the role that conscience plays in self-judgment, we turn to dominant interpretations of ‘Augustinian interiority’ in contemporary scholarship. This may seem like an unnecessary detour onto a rather bumpy road! But I hope to demonstrate in the fifth and sixth sections, that competing accounts of ‘Augustinian interiority’ fail to adequately understand the dialectical relation between interiority and exteriority. In particular, we will see how Augustine regards the privacy of conscience (interiority) as necessary for the Christian to gradually re-order herself to an appropriately

³⁷⁹ s. 12.3, 37.10, 47.11, 93.9.13, 107.7.8, 137.11.14, 270.5.

³⁸⁰ s. 38.8.

³⁸¹ s. 306.10.

³⁸² s. 47.8.

³⁸³ s. 133.4.

³⁸⁴ en. Ps.35.5.

³⁸⁵ s. 47.23.

³⁸⁶ s. 21.8, 36.4, 50.3, 72.5, 105.13, 177.4.

public love of neighbour (exteriority). Further, this relation between interiority and exteriority is dependent upon the gift of the Spirit's love, which makes us properly social. In other words, this brief detour is intended to eventually lead us back to our main road, better prepared to see the beauty of the terrain.

Scholarly debate on 'Augustinian interiority' arises largely as a result of competing accounts of Augustine's relation to modernity, especially his influence on Descartes. Our present concern does not involve entry into that particular fray, though certainly the conclusions we draw have implications for what can rightfully be claimed as 'Augustinian' in modernity. Dominant interpretations in scholarship, as we will see, tend to either emphasise the distinction between interiority and exteriority (as with Charles Taylor and Philip Cary), or to relate them by dissolving any distinction at all between them (as with Charles Mathewes and Michael Hanby).

Undoubtedly, one of the most prominent accounts of Augustinian interiority is found in Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self*.³⁸⁷ For Taylor, Augustine inaugurates a Western tradition of "radical reflexivity". Augustine follows Plato in his divisions between spirit and matter, higher and lower, eternal and temporal, immutable and changing, but for Augustine all such distinctions are construed "centrally and essentially", in terms of the distinction between inner and outer (129). We turn to God by "attending to ourselves as *inner*" (129) and "in the intimacy of self-presence" (129) we find God is always already present to us. Thus, when I recognize that God is the ground of my own self-knowledge and my perceptions and judgments of all else, I see "the truth is *not* in me. I see the truth 'in' God" (135). As it has been popularly put, for Augustine, the turn "inward" leads "upward"; and the movement "inward" occurs by that "radical reflexivity" in which I turn from all else to attend to the

³⁸⁷ *Sources of the Self* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1992).

“inner”. Taylor’s account does not address, however, what happens after the “inward turn”; and thus the distinction between “inner” and “outer” seems an impermeable one.

Whereas Taylor presents an Augustine who advises the “inward turn”, and does not stick around to tell us what’s next, Philip Cary’s Augustine both advises the “inward turn”, and wants us to stay there. Cary’s argument is that Augustine is responsible for the construction of a (false) concept of a “private inner space.”³⁸⁸ By turning to that inner space, Cary believes Augustine turns away from salvific “Christological fleshiness” (x) and also from loving ‘the other’ (141). Indeed, Cary presents this inner space as an “alternative” to the bodily world (63). After tracing the development of inner space in Augustine’s earlier works,³⁸⁹ in his final chapter Cary looks at Augustine’s mature conception of this inner space as described in the turn to memory in *Confessions* 10. Cary details how Augustine discovers in his memory the desire for happiness, which is equivalent to his desire for God. But Cary also argues that we do not just find the desire for happiness there, but happiness *itself*: “the point of Augustinian inwardness is to find once more the Truth and Happiness, the God that has always been within” (139). In this reading, ‘interiority’ and ‘exteriority’ are, indeed, alternatives; and it is within ‘interiority’ that happiness is found: “Thus within the inner space of the self is located both the origin and the goal of human life. For the happy life that we all love is nothing else but joy in the Truth...” (139). In this opposition between interiority and exteriority, Cary seems to be right that the incarnation and the other fade astonishingly from view.

Charles Mathewes could not disagree with Cary more. For Mathewes, as he argues in his *A Theology of Public Life*, Augustinian ‘interiority’ is not about “a sort of private inner chamber”, but instead “a way of conceiving that the self is, at its base, always facing the

³⁸⁸ *Augustine’s Invention of the Inner Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.3.

³⁸⁹ The very fact that Cary’s treatment of Augustine’s concept of “inner space” nowhere includes a mention of conscience undercuts the grand claims he makes.

reality of God.”³⁹⁰ The reality of God joins us to the world, and it would seem in Mathewes’ reading, that we primarily face that reality *in* the world. “[S]olitary introspective” practices receive a mention, but no more (55, 56). Instead, the focus is upon demonstrating all the ways in which Augustine’s theology points to the “confounding of interiority and exteriority in God’s creative and consummative action” (47). Mathewes’ interpretation of Augustine’s conception of Christ as “the inner teacher” does not entail the priority and necessity of turning within to listen, but instead is a “transcendental presupposition of our constitution” that recognizes that “the ineliminable presence of the Logos in the world is the condition for the world’s intelligibility...wherever truth is, there is Christ” (54). Mathewes sets up an equivalence between Christ “within” and “without”, and he makes a similar move to demonstrate how the Augustinian “inward turn” is about the importance of engaging the other. We only truly become ourselves by turning toward others, both divine and human: “all questions of otherness are related to that most basic otherness, that of God, and so must be seen as in part manifestations of the challenge of divine otherness” (115). Thus as in the ‘inward turn’, I discover that my own selfhood depends upon an Other, God’s presence to me, so ‘outward’ in the world this same logic applies: “As the self is always already involved in dialogue, with itself and with God, dialogue with others is not a radical change, and can correct, enrich and guide the self’s development” (141). Mathewes writes “we use engagement, in all its forms from the loving communion of marriage to the dialogical community of debate, in order to more fully grasp that Word...” (130). In completely rejecting any notion of ‘interiority’ as an inner space in which we may commune with God, Mathewes binds selfhood entirely to life in the world: “...to reach out to others is inescapable; in some way we just *are* that reaching out” (129). If Cary’s Augustine is a contented introvert

³⁹⁰ *A Theology of Public Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p.54.

lost in introspection, Mathewes' Augustine seems to have no time for such things amid all of the inter-religious dialogues and vestry meetings to attend.

Our final scholar in this survey, and the one to whom we will give the most attention, is Michael Hanby. Hanby's *Augustine and Modernity* provides a bold and complex interpretation of Augustine that casts Taylor and Cary (among others) as sparring partners.³⁹¹ Like Mathewes, though in a far subtler fashion, Hanby presents Augustine as one who believes that the saving work of the Triune God leads to the "break down or transfigur[ing]" of such "binaries" as "inner/outer" (35). Hanby argues that Augustine's soteriology must be understood aesthetically, and therefore much turns on the nature and transformation of our desire for beauty and how we ourselves participate in that beauty. Key to his account is Augustine's conception in *On the Trinity* of Christ as *exemplum* and *sacramentum*. The incarnate Christ is the "manifestation of the beauty of the Father" which arouses in us the desire for God; the Son in flesh, then, is the divine rhetoric which persuades us of the divine love (Christ as *exemplum*) (61). However, the very possibility of perceiving love as desirable depends upon a knowledge which recognizes it. In other words, the recognition of Christ as *exemplum* is itself the result of God's grace in which the Spirit makes Christ's divine life already present within me as *sacramentum*: "Our love of and intention of the end as *exemplum* requires for its intelligibility the mediation and giving of that end as *sacramentum*" (67). By the activity of Son and Spirit, then, we become beautiful. Hanby emphasizes how for Augustine the Christian is always already *within* Christ as both the way and end of our salvation. This *within* Christ includes being members of his body, the Church (58). It is as members of the Church that Christ "incorporates us into his *responsio*" to the Father, especially in worship which arises from a delight in God; and it is in the life of the Church (liturgical, sacramental, pedagogical, etc.) that Christ is presented to us as an object of desire

³⁹¹ *Augustine and Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

(37). In short, then, I both come to recognize beauty and become beautiful myself by the activity of the Son in the Church. Hanby so stresses the centrality of the Church that he even speaks of it as “the middle term between soul and God” (58), and he refers to how Augustine’s understanding of Christological mediation “conflates Christology and ecclesiology” (41).

Because of the nature of desire, and what facilitates the realization of that desire, Hanby writes “interiority is constituted precisely through radical exteriority” (58). By so joining God and Church, Hanby is able to denote any activity of God’s as “exterior”. As Hanby puts it, selfhood is “*ecclesiologically* constituted” (100). That is, the Christian’s desire for God is aroused by a beauty she perceives outside herself: the beauty of Christ present to her by the life of his body, the Church. Hanby also sees this logic at work in Augustine’s mature interpretation of Saint Paul in Romans. In concluding that when Paul laments the effects of sin in Romans (“I do not do what I want and do the very thing I hate”) he writes as a Christian, Augustine sees an “interiority [that] is radically exteriorized” (99). The interior conflict, for the Christian, is a result of what is exterior: God’s activity mediated through the Church. The gradual overcoming of this conflict occurs by “neither a self-objectification nor a sacrificial self-negation, but a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving” (100). Thus, again, the interior conflict is overcome by exteriority through “the soul’s ecstatic reversal by opening it in charity to the Body’s participation in the doxological sacrifice of its Head” (100). Hanby is even willing to speak of God as “exterior” apart from any notion of the mediation of the Church. When discussing the *imago dei* he describes God’s Trinitarian life as “most alterior and extrinsic”, and yet it is “interior” to me in my intellectual life of remembering, knowing and loving. Here, too, he also pivots to another “exteriority” in that my realization of the divine image within depends upon my having others (in this case Hanby specifies members of a city) whom I can love (47). How, then, is “interiority...constituted precisely through radical

exteriority”)? Well, because “exteriority” for Hanby includes any and all means by which God acts.³⁹²

V. Conscience and the Need for Privacy

We can now return to our exploration of the role of conscience in self-judgment, and do so in the light of the debate on Augustinian interiority. We begin by considering why Augustine sees a need for privacy during our earthly sojourn; and thus, *pace* Mathewes and Hanby, we will see that Augustine maintains a role for a sense of interiority as a space that is open to God, but inaccessible to all others. Indeed, part of the role of conscience is to make us more attuned to God by enabling us to retreat from others. Much of the animus behind Mathewes’ and Hanby’s interpretations is the establishment of a sharp division between Augustinian and Cartesian interiority; they are especially focused upon how Augustinian interiority is, in fact, influenced by what is exterior to it: history, the authority of the church, beauty, etc. On this particular question, we have no disagreement with them. As we have seen in our first chapter, Augustine sees an absolutely essential role for imitation. Yet Mathewes and Hanby do not see that there is another way in which Augustine understands interiority, and that is as an inner, private space in which we can dwell alone before God. This does not negate the influence of all that is ‘exterior’, but it does underline our constant need to attempt not to be entirely determined by our life in the world. Thus, the need for privacy arises from one of the threats of perverted sociality: to act according to what will gain others’ approval. For the Christian, the interior sense of standing alone before God in our self-judgment--the testimony of our conscience--focuses us upon obedient service to God, rather than performing for others.³⁹³

³⁹² I know of no place in Augustine, and Hanby does not cite one, in which God or God’s mediated activity is referred to using the language of exteriority.

³⁹³ I take it that in what follows Augustine’s repeated stress of how self-judgment by conscience enables us to be alone before God recommends both a practice of regular retreat to solitude and also an on-going awareness of oneself before God that is possible precisely because conscience may be experienced as a kind of private space.

Augustine provides a compelling discussion of this role of conscience in his interpretation of the parable of the ten virgins. Augustine's reading of the parable remains remarkably consistent from its earliest instance (in *On Eighty-Three Varied Questions, Question, Question 59* [389-395]) to its latest appearances in his works (*Sermon 149* [412-413]).³⁹⁴ In all the readings, he interprets the virgins as Christians who act with self-restraint (especially in relation to their senses, thus there are five wise and five foolish virgins); the lamps represent their good works; and the oil is the joy they derive from those good works. The difference between the wise and foolish virgins is between those who determine their actions entirely by others' approval and those who engage in self-judgment by their consciences: as Augustine writes in his earliest commentary, the foolish act "in order to capture human glory" while the wise act "before God in order to please him in the inner joy of conscience [*in interiore gaudio conscientiae*]."³⁹⁵

The foolish virgins' foolishness is revealed starkly at the final judgment. The wise virgins cannot give oil to the foolish ones because, at the final judgment, we all stand before God *alone*. When an account is demanded of them, the foolish virgins "wish to have before God, who is the examiner of the heart, the witness of men who do not see the heart". Seeking others' approval as the source of joy has become such a "habit" that they try to do so even when it is an evident impossibility!³⁹⁶ The desire to have others as one's witnesses at the final judgment reveals two problems of the foolish virgins' lives. First, they are unable to give God an account of how and why they acted because they never engaged in the difficult work of making such decisions themselves. This is not to say Augustine is calling Christians to disregard the opinions of all others; indeed, he criticizes the foolish virgins for only listening to the flatterers, and not those who criticize them. He is pointing to how, in determining one's

³⁹⁴ He also discusses the parable in *s. 93, ep. 140, en. Ps. 49 and 140.*

³⁹⁵ *div. qu. 59.3.*

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

actions entirely by others' approval, one forfeits the responsibility of self-judgment; such self-judgment prepares us for God's judgment. Second, the foolish virgins also live according to others' approval because it is so easy to gain. Thus Augustine notes the foolish virgins want witnesses who "do not see the heart", unlike God who does. Augustine makes this point more clearly in one of his later interpretations of the parable: "That you do [good works]...anyone can see; but with what kind of intention you do it only God can see."³⁹⁷ The foolish virgins, then, lived lives of performance that avoided both deciding how to act for themselves and examining who they were off-stage.

The wise virgins, in contrast, act "before God in order to please him in the inner joy of conscience."³⁹⁸ Or, as he puts it in a later interpretation, we ought to follow the wise virgins and "carry [the oil] inside, where God can see; carry the testimony of your conscience there."³⁹⁹ We note, first, the language of interiority. Augustine contrasts the private self-judgment of the wise virgins with the foolish virgins' public display that is always in search of applause. It is precisely the inaccessibility of my conscience to others that enables me an alternative sense of my action than that of the one that I see reflected back at me in the response of others. Our conscience provides an *independent* self-judgment; because of my conscience I need not merely be governed by the crowd but have my own testimony to rely on. We must also note that this interiority of conscience is tied to an awareness of being viewed *by God*. It is not the case, then, that self-judgment by conscience is a practice in which we strike off by ourselves to revel in our glorious individuality. Rather, I still seek the approval of an Other, but in this case I do so by considering the shape of obedience before God rather than deliberating which performance might garner the most praise. Thus the solitary testimony of one's conscience enables an independent self-judgment that attempts to

³⁹⁷ *Ep.* 149.12.

³⁹⁸ *div. qu.* 59.3.

³⁹⁹ *s.* 93.10.

conform itself to God's judgment. And so, the wise virgins are prepared--or, at least, more prepared--for the final judgment. Augustine notes that their consciences were "bearing good witness for them before God."⁴⁰⁰ Whereas the foolish virgins sought other human beings as their witnesses, the wise virgins have their consciences. The wise virgins can give an account of themselves to God at the final judgment, for, in effect, they have been doing so in the privacy of their conscience throughout their lives.

The relation between conscience and an independent self-judgment is especially clear in two central verses that appear in Augustine's discussions of conscience. In *Question* 64, we see him quote Galatians 6:4: "All men must test their own work; then that work, rather than their neighbour's work, will become a cause for boast." He takes this verse to provide a Scriptural basis for the need for an independent self-judgment, precisely what distinguishes the wise from foolish virgins. In three later interpretations of the parable, we see Augustine pair Galatians 6:4 with 2 Corinthians 1:12: "Our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience".⁴⁰¹ In pairing these two verses, Augustine links the need for an independent self-judgment with the testimony of our conscience. He also pairs these verses in a passage we treated above, his sixth homily on the Epistle of John, and, as we will see shortly, in *City* 5.⁴⁰² It is difficult to date precisely the first and last times he cites these verses, as dating the commentaries on the Psalms remains a largely speculative activity. The most secure dates for works in which the pairing occurs are the *Tractates on the First Letter of John* (406/407) and *City* 5 (415); as well, there are dates for two sermons in which the pairing is found that stand between these two works: *Sermon* 54.2 (409-410) and *Sermon* 93.9 (411-412). A possible dating by La Bonnardiere of *Explanations of the Psalms* 140, as occurring *before* the Donatist controversy, would mean that Augustine first paired these verses sometime earlier than

⁴⁰⁰ *div. qu.* 59.3.

⁴⁰¹ *en. Ps.* 49.9, 140.13, s. 93.9. For references to this verse outside commentary on the Parable of the Virgins, see also *en. Ps.* 53.8, 149.11, s. 91.4, 185.3, 354.3.

⁴⁰² See also s. 54.2.

405.⁴⁰³ In any case, at the very least, this pairing appeared somewhat regularly over nine years from 406 to 415 in some of his key discussions of conscience.

The difference the privacy of conscience makes is further explored after the latest comments on the parable of the virgins when Augustine comes to write *City*. Our foolish and wise virgins reappear there, but this time as citizens of the two cities. In the most famous summary of the differences between the two cities, Augustine includes the following: “The [city of man], therefore, glories in itself, and the [city of God] in the Lord; the one seeks glory from men, the other finds its highest glory in God, the witness of our conscience” (14.28). Thus we note that the contrast in this quotation is identical to that between the wise and foolish virgins: in the city of man, they seek glory from each other, whereas in the city of God they seek it from God, who is “the witness of our conscience”. *City* is especially useful for our consideration of the privacy of conscience, because whereas the parable of the virgins focuses upon the final judgment, in *City*, Augustine spends much of the book elaborating differences between the two cities in their earthly sojourns. We see two remarkable ways in which the privacy of self-judgment by conscience is superior to the search for public praise.

First, the suicide of Lucretia demonstrates the most extreme result of depending upon others’ approval. Some believed that Lucretia was a willing participant in her rape. Augustine interprets her suicide as an attempt to demonstrate the severity of her remorse after the rape had occurred: “she judged that she must use self-punishment to exhibit the state of her mind to the eyes of men to whom she could not show her conscience” (1.19). She sought to overcome the privacy of her conscience by her suicide, because she could not endure others judging her guilty. This total dependence upon others’ approval for one’s own sense of moral stature is dangerous precisely because of the fallibility and selectivity of others’ judgments.

⁴⁰³ See A.M. La Bonnardiere, ‘*Les Enarrationes in Psalmos* prechees par saint Augustine a l’occasion de fetes de martyrs’, *Recherches augustinienes* 7 (1971), 93-94.

Augustine contrasts Lucretia's suicide with the conduct of Christian women who have been raped: "Within themselves, indeed, by the testimony of their own conscience, they have the glory of chastity. Moreover, they have it in the sight of God, and they required nothing more" (1.19). The testimony of conscience, then, provides a stability that counters others' disapproval; this stability arises from conscience's place "in the sight of God", no matter how others' may disapprove or condemn us.

Second, Augustine's analysis of the Romans' love of glory shows the destructive result to others of depending upon their approval. Having established in Books 1 to 4 that the success of the Roman empire did not depend upon the support of their gods, Augustine then turns in Book 5 to discuss the role that Roman virtue played in that success. He enlists the aid of many Roman authors to demonstrate that what drove Romans above all else was the love for glory, which Augustine defines as "the judgment of men thinking well of other men." He writes, "They chose to live for it, and they did not hesitate to die for it. They suppressed all other desires in their boundless desire for this one thing. In short, because they deemed it ignoble for their fatherland to serve and glorious for it to rule and command, the first object of all their desire was freedom, and the second mastery" (5.12). Augustine has defined, in short, the ordering principle of the Roman empire: the desire for freedom and mastery are subordinate to the desire for glory. The Romans are, then, the ultimate example of the foolish virgins: all their actions are for the sake of others' approval.

This desire for glory does, at its best, restrain certain vices; there is a discipline required to achieve glory which may lead one to reject other vicious desires (5.13). Further, others' judgments may, in fact, motivate us to act well. As Augustine notes, one who desires glory will "take care not to displease men of good judgment. For there are many good aspects of character, and many persons are competent judges of such aspects even though not many have them". The desire for glory is separate, then, from the lust for domination; indeed, the

former may curb the latter (5.19). It remains the case, however, that the desire for glory depends upon an audience; and thus inherent within that desire is the need to act in ways that will impress those watchful eyes. This need is the source of the Romans' heroism and generosity, but also of their imperialism and violence. Once they had achieved the glory of their own freedom, the Romans then "also sought dominion over others" (5.11); in this conception glory increases with the number of spectators. Further, this dominion was accomplished by war. Augustine notes that the expansion of the Roman Empire could perhaps have occurred without violence, or at least far less violence than it did; yet, he notes wryly "no one could be victorious where no one had fought" (5.17). Both the success and savagery of the Roman Empire are tied to the desire for glory; and thus, this success holds within it the logic of its destruction.

Augustine contrasts this desire for glory with the testimony of conscience. Whereas Romans were ordered by a vice that needed a human audience, Christian virtue grounds itself in God as witness. Thus Augustine writes, again pairing the two verses we discussed above, that true virtue "is not content with any human testimony apart from that of its own conscience. Hence the apostle says, 'For this is our glory, the testimony of our conscience' (2 Cor 1:12). And in another place he says: 'But let everyone prove his own work, and then he shall have glory in himself, and not in another' (Gal 6:4)" (5.12). Both citizens, then, desire recognition; we are not autonomous creatures. However, seeking this recognition primarily from other human beings provides an ultimately unstable basis both for my own identity and my relation to others. Whereas the independent testimony of my conscience before God attunes me to the only true ground for identity and relation to others, our relation to God.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰⁴ Augustine also frequently discusses conscience to show the contrast between the mere outward appearance of faith--including being baptised--and the inward reality of it which results in a 'good conscience'. The key verse he cites on this point is 1 Peter 3:21: "And baptism, which [Noah's ark] prefigured, now saves you--not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Christ..."; he generally interprets it as specifying that baptism is only a saving baptism if there is also true faith present, which is the basis of a good conscience (to this reader, this seems a forced reading of the text). Thus he

VI. Conscience and Heavenly Transparency

And yet, despite the crucial role that privacy plays on earth, Augustine is clear that in heaven all will be public. We noted earlier in our discussion of ‘conscientia’ that Augustine commented how human communication is frustrated by the privacy of our consciousnesses; and that true intimacy would involve complete knowledge of that which now remains often agonizingly outside our view. In his stunning account of human beings’ perfected bodies in *City 22*, Augustine describes the vision that will enable such knowledge; the reward of faith will be that we will truly see. Our sight will not simply achieve the “keenness of sight which serpents or eagles are said to have” for they “discern nothing but corporeal substances.” Rather we will even be able to see “incorporeal things” (22.29). Augustine readily admits that such a state is essentially impossible to conceive of now, but he speculates about what it will be like. Our perfected vision will see God “everywhere present and governing all things, both material and spiritual”. Augustine goes on to detail the implications of our seeing God *everywhere*, including that we will be able to see one another’s thoughts (22.29). With this perfected vision, the distinction between interiority and exteriority vanishes entirely and forever to enable perfect communion.

A key challenge in interpreting ‘Augustinian interiority’, then, is how Augustine’s conception of earthly inwardness relates to this vision of heavenly transparency. This vision immediately problematizes too rigid a distinction between interiority and exteriority, for it makes clear that such a distinction is *temporary*. With regard to our scholarly interpretations of Augustinian interiority, Taylor fails to notice this; Cary mentions it, yet he does not address how he sees this vision relating to his interpretation of Augustine’s ‘private space’.

cites this verse against the Manicheans and Donatists; see, for example, *c. Faust.* 19.12 and *bapt.* 4.2.3, 5.28.39. It appears elsewhere, less polemically charged, in *Jo. ev. tr.* 80.3. The role of conscience in this argument certainly relates to Augustine’s sense of interiority; it is less related, however, to self-judgment, and thus we will not go into it further. Also see n405 below on the relation between love and a good conscience in Augustine’s interpretation of 1 Tim 1:5.

And so, whereas in the last section we sided with Taylor and Cary on the importance of interiority's distinction from exteriority, we now incorporate the ideas of Hanby and Mathewes, who emphasize the passing nature of the distinction. However, even as we agree with Hanby and Mathewes on the importance of this distinction as passing, we remain concerned that they see that passing occurring far earlier than Augustine does. In other words, we do not see an overcoming of the distinction between interiority and exteriority in this life; rather we see that, by the gift of the Spirit's love, interiority and exteriority are not opposed to one another, but are related in Christian discipleship; they remain distinguishable, but dialectically related, moments.

Something of this relation is evident in *Sermon 47* delivered in 414. In this sermon, Augustine is interpreting Ezekiel 34, in which God is pictured as a Shepherd to his sheep. Augustine proceeds to provide an interpretation of the chapter beginning with verse 17 and ending with verse 34. Mid-way through the sermon, he discusses verse 25: "And I will banish evil beasts from the land; and they will dwell in the desert in hope." The evil beasts, of course, are those heretics who are disturbing the peace of the Catholic Church. Augustine goes on to interpret the desert as signifying solitude, specifically the solitude of conscience: "It's a solitude indeed, because not only do no other human beings cross it, they don't even see it" (47.23). Whereas 'outside' there is a conflict caused by these 'evil beasts', 'within' there is a desert of conscience in which we can enjoy solitude. And what use are we to make of that solitude? "...we should interrogate our faith. Let us ask if there is love there inside. Let us see if it's not just the lips but the heart uttering, when we say, 'Forgive our debts, as we too forgive our debtors' (Mt 6:12). If it rings true, if we are speaking the truth where nobody can see, that's the desert where we can rest in hope" (47.23). The response Augustine enjoins to the conflict between Christians involves turning to one's conscience to consider whether one is ordered by love. If one is so ordered, one can 'rest in hope', and this hope is

specifically for when “we shall finally be transparent to each other...And our consciences will not be a desert or solitude, because everyone will be known to each other and will not have their thoughts unknown” (47.23). We interrogate ourselves whether or not we love so that we can live in hope of the eventual overcoming of the privacy of our conscience.⁴⁰⁵ Somehow the work of self-judgment by love is a means of living in hope for that heavenly transparency. The solitude of our conscience is at once lauded as a place of retreat *and* marked as a space where we hope for its eventual dissolution.

Self-judgment alone before God, then, is not a retreat into ourselves that shuts us off from others; instead we will see that Augustine views self-judgment as a means by which we become better at loving others.

VII. Self-Judgment and Neighbour-Love

At the beginning of this chapter, we saw the dynamic relation between self-love and neighbour-love in self-judgment: self-judgment is a feature of ordered self-love in which we withdraw from our neighbours; when we do so, however, we are concerned to judge the character of our love for them. Further, in our long discussion of conscience, we have seen the need for the solitude of our conscience, so that we may avoid relying on others’ judgments of us and may attain a proper self-judgment. And yet, as we have seen, our hope of heaven is tied to an expectation of the full realization of our sociality in communion with one

⁴⁰⁵ The presence of the triad of faith, hope and love is notable. Likely in the background is Augustine’s interpretation of another key verse on conscience, 1 Tim 1:5: “...love from a pure heart, good conscience and sincere faith”. Augustine equates this triad with that of faith, hope and love in 1 Corinthians 13:13. He does so first in *doc. Chr.* (1.40.44, 3.10.14) and the latest instance of it is in a sermon written ca. 417-419 (s. 158.6). Part of the implication of seeing the triads as equivalent is that Augustine must establish how a ‘good conscience’ is related to ‘hope’. His clearest account of this is in his commentary on Psalm 31: “Now when people perform good actions their love endows them with the hope that proceeds from a good conscience; for it is a good conscience that gives rise to hope. As a bad conscience plunges a person into complete despair, so a good conscience fills us entirely with hope. Then there will be the three realities of which the apostle speaks: ‘faith, hope and love’ (1 Cor 13:13)”. In another place he mentions this triad again, but this time he substitutes a good conscience for hope (1 Tim 1:5) (*en. Ps.* 31-2.5).

another and God. In our self-judgment, then, we do not shut ourselves off from others; instead, self-judgment is always related to and at the service of neighbour-love.

(1) The first way that Augustine relates self-judgment and neighbour-love is in maintaining that the Christian cannot oppose her 'good conscience' and her love of neighbour; in other words, the unity of the gift of love underlies and integrates these two foci of the Christian life. We see this in Augustine's early discussion of Paul's comments regarding brethren with a 'weak conscience'. In *Ways of Life* Augustine challenges the Manicheans' Scriptural basis for their abstemious eating and drinking habits. Augustine turns to their quotation from Romans, and shows how they only quote half the verse: "For you are in the habit of quoting only the words, 'It is good, brothers, neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine,' without adding what follows, 'nor anything whereby your brother stumbles, or is offended or is made weak'" (2.14.31). Augustine then counters their highly selective proof-texting by proceeding to quote the whole of Romans chapter 14 and the beginning of 15; and also quoting the other relevant texts at length (1 Corinthians 8 and 1 Corinthians 10). Augustine's conclusion is that Paul clearly is not saying that certain food and drink should be absolutely abstained from; rather one should so abstain for three reasons (1) in order to avoid over-indulging; (2) to prevent others from coming into contact with pagan rituals; (3) or finally "what is most praiseworthy of all, from love, not to offend the weakness of those more feeble than ourselves, who abstain from these things" (2.14.33). In later interpretations of these passages, Augustine is more emphatic in arguing that our 'good conscience' cannot lead us to disregard the sensitivities of our fellow Christians, because they are members of the body of Christ. Even if I am assured that I am right and my sister is in error, it remains the case that she is a sister in Christ and therefore I ought to act with her best interest in mind.

Thus Paul's discussion of 'weak conscience', in Augustine's reading, situates self-judgment within the love shared between Christians in the Church.⁴⁰⁶

In on *The Good of Widows* (414), Augustine makes this argument by relating my good conscience to self-love, and my care for public reputation to neighbour-love. Augustine decries those who use their clear conscience to ignore what others think of them: "You must pay no attention to those holy men or women who, when they are criticized for some carelessness that results in their being suspected of wrongdoing they know they would have no part of, say that they are satisfied to have a clear conscience before God" (22.27). Ignoring such criticisms is both "unwise" and "cruel" because of the effects it has on others. Caring for one's reputation, in so far as this is possible, is in fact part of loving your neighbour: "Hence any woman who does not lay herself open to charges of sin and crime does well for herself; but one who also preserves her good name is kind to others as well. Our life is necessary for ourselves, but our good name is necessary for others" (22.27). Augustine supports this argument with three quotations from Paul, by means of which he maintains that the Christian ought to care about her reputation (2 Cor 8:21, 1 Cor 10:33, Phil 4:8-9). Those three quotations are thereafter immediately followed by three others (1 Cor 4:3, Gal 1:10, 2 Cor 1:12) that establish that the Christian cares about her reputation for the good of others. And so, regardless of what the testimony of my conscience may say, in obedience to Christ's command to love my neighbour, I must attend to my public persona for the sake of the Church.

(2) The second way that Augustine relates self-judgment and neighbour-love is to suggest that self-judgment is a practice which *develops* my capacity for neighbour-love; we see this in *Tractates on the First Letter of John*. In this, we see an even more immediate connection between 'drinking' and 'becoming a fountain'. Thus rather than affirming that the

⁴⁰⁶ s. 62.4.7, 82.3.4.

conscience and the neighbour are both foci for the Christian, Augustine argues that the former is at the service of the latter. He not only says that love is the criteria for self-judgment, he includes self-judgment as *integral* to neighbour-love: “It remains, that that man loves his brother, who before God, where God alone sees, assures his own heart, and questions his heart whether he does this indeed for love of the brethren...” (6.2). Part of the role of self-judgment is, as we noted above, simply to question whether or not what appears to be an act of generosity toward another may be nothing but my own grasping after another’s approval--and thus I am not genuinely serving the other but am placing them at my service. Yet is Augustine’s emphasis upon intention anything more than an obsession with motivation? Should the focus not be on whether or not the Christian’s action seems to do good, while considering intention is nothing but a distraction from that?

On the contrary, Augustine argues that a self-judgment that considers intention is a means by which we can develop our capacity to love our neighbour. If my action is motivated primarily by seeking others’ approval, I am impaired in my ability to genuinely love them. That is, for Augustine self-judgment by the privacy of conscience can gradually re-order me from a constant seeking of others’ approval to an attention to the others’ genuine needs. Thus, the very privacy of self-judgment results, in a certain sense, in a properly public action: not one that has my ego’s need to be liked as its end, but rather another’s well-being. Thus elsewhere in his *Tractates on the First Letter of John*, Augustine again calls his listeners to engage in self-judgment: “So then the divine Scripture calls us off from the display of the face outwardly to that which is within; from this surface which is vaunted before men, it calls us off to that which is within. Return to your own heart, question it” (8.9). Augustine then proceeds to connect the importance of self-judgment “within” to the claim that love may sometimes need to be severe: “The proud caresses, love is severe. The one clothes, the other smites. For the one clothes in order to please men, the other smites in order to correct by

discipline. More accepted is the blow of charity than the alms of pride. Come then within, brethren; and in all things, whatsoever ye do, look unto God your witness” (8.9) In other words, then, acting entirely according to others’ approval may cause us to avoid the need to be severe out of love. In the preceding commentary, Augustine uttered his oft-quoted words, “Love, and do what you will”. The context, which is generally neglected, is in fact an argument that the Christian needs to be ready to love in ways that others may not see as loving. Immediately prior to “Love, and do what you will”, Augustine comments that acts of love sometimes needs to appear “rough” and “savage”, yet such acts “are done for discipline at the bidding of love” (7.8). What may seem like the most loving action to others may fail entirely to respond to what the other genuinely needs. Thus in the privacy of conscience, with God alone as our witness, we ought to consider what would be most loving, and not what would publicly be perceived to be most loving.⁴⁰⁷ Self-judgment, then, insofar as it is able to turn from the facile judgments of others, may be a discipline by which I can attend more sensitively to others’ needs.

Augustine makes this suggestion in another subtle way. Having just established in the 8th commentary that one should publicly do good both to meet certain needs and also to provide a moral example, he then writes: “Show mercy, then, as men of merciful hearts; because in loving enemies also, you love brethren” (8.10). The connection between Augustine’s immediately preceding discussion and this encouragement to love our enemies is not immediately evident. The underlying connection is the following: only if I act for the good of another, and not for their approval, will I be able to love my enemy. That is, if I act for others’ approval, I am only likely to act for those who will praise me! The solitude of my

⁴⁰⁷ Of course we see in these comments Augustine’s own agonizing over how to deal with the Donatists, and his justification of certain methods of which we may disapprove. Such disapproval, however, does not wholly dismiss the validity of Augustine’s point that sometimes the most loving action may appear to others’ to be precisely the opposite. I fail to see how one could think coherently about the demands of parenting--to choose only one example--apart from Augustine’s insight here.

self-judgment by conscience as explored in the preceding paragraph, then, is required for my capacity to love my enemy. As we have seen above, the foolish virgins concern themselves only with those who flatter them, and pay no attention to their critics. Similarly, when I act for others' approval, my enemy falls very quickly from view. Yet, as Augustine goes on, Christ calls us to love our enemy: "Wish for him that he may have with you eternal life; wish for him that he may be your brother..." (8.10). The privacy of self-judgment by conscience, then, is a means by which I prepare myself to love even my enemy; I gradually free myself from a constant pre-occupation with others' reactions to my actions, and instead orient myself according to what I discern to be their need. We might say, then, that the private practice of self-judgment is oriented to discerning the true public good.

The relation to neighbour that responds to genuine need and seeks the good of all is in stark contrast to that which sees others primarily as members of my audience whose applause I constantly seek. We noted above how the desire for glory that defines Roman heroes in *City* always requires the recognition of their superiority; thus, as Augustine notes, even when the Roman Empire granted citizenship to others outside its initial territory, that citizenship was granted not by persuasion and consent, but by violence and imposition. The Roman heroes needed to be seen as conquerors in order that they could receive glory (5.17). Augustine's description of the Christian apostles is clearly in contrast to these Roman heroes, and it involves precisely the kind of love that he ties to self-judgment as we saw above. Augustine emphasizes how the apostles evangelized all people even when they were well aware of the hatred and persecution it would cause. What determined their evangelism was that others needed to hear it. However, when they did receive glory "they referred that glory itself to the glory of God, by whose grace they were what they were. And with that spark they kindled the hearts of those in their care, so that they also burned with the love of Him Who, again, had made them what they were" (5.15). The apostles, then, acted to make the Gospel a public

communication in order that there might be a universal fellowship. Such actions were dependent upon freedom from concern for others' approval. Thus, whereas the apostles preached the Gospel to all in order to be united with all in fellowship with God, the Roman heroes imposed citizenship with others in a way that remained at the service of their own quest for glory.⁴⁰⁸

(3) The final way that Augustine relates self-judgment and neighbour-love is in the practice of confession to fellow Christians. Through confession, Christians are united in prayer to God. This is the clearest earthly witness to eventual heavenly transparency. Though the border between interiority and exteriority is not overcome between Christians, it is traversed by love. As an act of service to his readers, in *Confessions* 10, Augustine engages in self-judgment so he can confess his sins. Thus the truth of his confession to others depends upon his solitary dialogue with God: "I can say nothing right to other people unless you have heard it from me first, nor can you even hear anything of the kind from me which you have not first told me" (10.2.2). This encounter with God, in which Augustine's ability to hear from God is the basis for his speaking truthfully to God, is the grounds by which he might then turn to others and speak truthfully about himself. And this activity itself is a result of the gift of love: "...my confession in your presence is silent, yet not altogether silent: there is no noise to it, but it shouts by love" (10.2.2).

This shouting to God *in* love can only be properly (over) heard if listened to *with* love. To confess the depths of himself to others is to speak without the ability to offer any "proof" (10.3.4).⁴⁰⁹ Augustine writes because his readers want to know who he is "within, where they

⁴⁰⁸ See Rowan Williams' provocative article on City of God in which he argues, against Hannah Arendt, that rather than destroying any notion of the public, Augustine "is engaged in a redefinition of the public itself, designed to show that it is life outside the Christian community which fails to be truly public, authentically political" ('Politics and the Soul: A Reading of the City of God', *Milltown Studies* 19/12 (1987), 55-72 (p.58).

⁴⁰⁹ In *Handbook*, Augustine even suggests that our love of others depends upon faith because we cannot know what lies within them: "We love God now by faith, then we shall love Him through sight. Now we love even our neighbor by faith; for we who are ourselves mortal know not the hearts of mortal men. But in the future life, the Lord 'both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts,

can venture neither eye nor ear nor mind” (10.3.4). Thus the border between interior and exterior, private and public, is only crossed when Augustine’s confessions are heard by his fellow Christians with whom by the Spirit he is “bonded together by love” (10.3.4). Even without proof, they apply a hermeneutic of love which believes what he confesses: “I cannot prove it, but all whose ears are open to me by love will believe me” (10.3.3). And when what Augustine confesses is believed in love, then his fellow Christians turn also to a dialogue with God: “Let them sigh with relief over [my good actions] and with grief over [my bad actions], and let both hymns and laments ascend into your presence from the hearts of my brethren, which are your censers” (10.4.5). Thus, those others who hear that confession, too, are turned toward God.

This description of his confessing to his fellow Christians does clearly anticipate that heavenly transparency. For when Augustine confessed out of love and his listeners believe him out of love, there is an overcoming of the tragic division between them that is a result of the privacy of their consciences. And the result of Augustine’s confession is that they are united in prayer and thanksgiving with God. Yet this earthly traversing of interiority and exteriority by love falls far short of that heavenly transparency. For the interior and exterior are related but remain distinguished. Augustine needed to be alone before God in order to confess truthfully to others; and his listeners could not ‘see’ the truth of what he said, but believed it in love. Thus while this practice of confession approaches that heavenly transparency, it is still not that perfect communion when God will be ‘all in all’.

Our exploration of self-judgment, then, has continually returned to the relation between self-love and neighbour-love. Self-judgment is a practice of rightly-ordered self-love (self-mercy), as we seek to examine ourselves alone before God. Even within this solitude,

and then shall every man have praise of God’; for every man shall love and praise in his neighbor the virtue which, that it may not be hid, the Lord Himself shall bring to light” (*ench.* 121.32).

however, we consider how well we love our neighbour. Further, we have seen our need not simply to depend on others' judgments of us, but to stand alone before God in our conscience and seek to conform our judgments to God's. This very move inward, as we have seen, allows us to better move outward to others. The Spirit's love, then, leads us inward to judge ourselves before God, and the Spirit's work is what we seek to discern within ourselves and to distinguish from our own entanglement with lust; it is by such rigorous self-judgment that the Spirit develops our capacity to love our neighbour. Thus even as Augustine sees a need for solitary self-judgment before God, it remains always part of the dialectical process by which the Spirit is making us properly social.

Conclusion

We began, in the Introduction, by situating this project in relation to an essay by a contemporary theologian (Hauerwas' 'Love's Not All You Need'), and we will conclude the same way, by engaging with Rowan Williams's 'Has Secularism Failed?'⁴¹⁰ We began and will end thus in order to gesture towards how Augustine's understanding of the role of the Spirit in judgment might offer resources for contemporary theological concerns.

In 'Has Secularism Failed?', Williams offers one failure of 'procedural secularism.' By 'procedural secularism' he denotes forms of secularism which exclude religious discourse from public discussion and debate, with the resulting failure of "*functionalism*" (12). We are left with entirely instrumental approaches to the questions and controversies that face us; one result of which is that the logic of the marketplace dominates which "takes for granted [that] contests of power [are] the basic form of social relation" (15).

Part of the freshness of Williams' essay is that he does not immediately mount a defense of religious faith's place in the public square. Instead, he sketches an alternative to secularist functionalism with reference to art. Citing lines from the poems of T.S. Eliot and R.S. Thomas, Williams suggests that such art is "anti-secular" because it enacts and demands "a willingness to see things or persons as the objects of another sensibility than my own, perhaps also another sensibility than *our* own, whoever 'we' are, even if the 'we' is humanity itself. The point is that what I am aware of, I am aware of as in significant dimensions not defined by my awareness" (13). In short, to make and to engage with art is to acknowledge "a variety of seeings or readings" (13). This very variety challenges the functionalism of procedural secularism; there are always *alternative* perspectives.

Williams also connects such artistic vision with a certain moral vision; as artists and appreciators of art are open to "a variety of seeings or readings", so Williams refers to Raymond Gaita's argument that "vital morality...has more to do with seeing the other as a special sort of object for a subjectivity not your own than with acknowledging another subject" (17). Specifically Gaita has argued that we can glimpse the preciousness of someone when we see she is beloved by another. Such a moral perspective, too, Williams offers, is anti-secular in that it perceives moral relations as "not circumscribed by what I as an individual find possible now" (17). Thus in both the case of art and morality such ways of

⁴¹⁰ In *Faith in the Public Square* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), pp.11-22.

seeing demand a “self-investment, even self-dispossession” to open oneself up to such alternate perspectives, especially the demand to look *lovingly*.

When he moves to Christian theology and worship, Williams argues they share with such artistic and moral visions an emphasis on transforming our ways of seeing. For the Christian, our seeing is always “shadowed...by the possibility of an always more sustained and self-invested seeing—a greater love” (17-18); and that divine perspective is one of “unrestricted time, total self-investment” (18). Specifically he suggests that theology and worship, at their best, are to “enact that dispossession” (20). This argument in ‘Has Secularism Failed’ recurs throughout the essays in Williams’ *Faith in the Public Square* as he applies an anti-secular perspective to such diverse and contentious issues as the relation between religion and human rights, the environmental crisis and the treatment of the elderly.

Our exploration of Augustine on judgment has focused, in a certain sense, on the nature of seeing. For Augustine we do not judge well apart from seeing lovingly: we can neither discern a thing’s nature, nor evaluate it, without attending to all creatures as known and loved by God. By the gift of the Spirit, Augustine believes that our seeing is transformed to more fully glimpse the reality of God’s good creation. Crucially such a seeing comes by the Spirit uniting us to the Father’s Word, in whom all things are created and in whom they flourish. Throughout his commentaries on Genesis, as we recall from the first chapter, Augustine interprets God’s declaration that all things are “good” as a distinctly pneumatological perception of creation. As the Spirit orders us within, so we are able to discern that order without.

We have traced especially the recurring theme of our middle place in creation; this spatial metaphor locates our own perception of self, other and nature in relation to God’s perception of them. As we saw in the second chapter, our loves are ordered as we subject ourselves to God, attend to others as equals, and subject nature to us. The challenge of taking up the middle, then, consists partly in locating the value of creation as existing apart from myself. In lust we abandon that middle and seek to put ourselves at the centre as the arbiter of value. To take up the middle by the Spirit’s love, then, is to practice the “dispossession” Williams refers to. As Augustine explicates his Christology in *The Trinity*, we are to follow Christ in choosing the way of justice rather than grasping for power.

Further, as the middle place alters our relation to creation, we have also seen in the third chapter, how our relation to time is altered in the light of God’s final judgment. On the one hand, we are called to moral judgment of ourselves and others, in order to prepare for that final judgment; on the other hand, we recognize that our judgments are limited and

provisional, and so we restrain and defer our judgments as we await Christ's return. Thus our time is opened up to God's time; by so doing, God's patience defines our lives in this age. It is by the Spirit's love that we dwell in time as pilgrims, hoping for the life to come and enduring what we must in this age. We have seen how Augustine understands the Scriptural demand to be merciful to consist in both the recognition of another's equality with us under God, and attention to this in-between age situated between Christ's first coming and his return. To judge mercifully, then, is to judge with an awareness of God as the only true judge.

And so, perhaps most difficult of all, our self-judgments are to seek to attune themselves to God's judgment of us, as we saw in the final chapter. We are not to merely let what garners applause determine how we will act. The solitude of conscience is essential to this practice. As mercy towards others involves recognizing their equality *under* God, mercy to ourselves consists in submitting ourselves *to* God. By the Spirit, a rightly-ordered self love seeks to discern the movement of the Spirit in us; and by the practice of self-judgment our love is ordered to be more properly social, to more fully have the neighbour's good in view. Thus the practice of self-judgment is also a practice born of hope of that heavenly transparency, when we will know one another perfectly.

Augustine's account of the role of the Holy Spirit in judgment brings together one of the distinctives of his Trinitarian theology (the Holy Spirit as the love eternally shared between Father and Son) with one of the distinctives of his ethics (the ordering of our loves). For Augustine, then, the Christian God is love and the dynamic of the Christian life lies in receiving and giving again that love. And that love requires judgment

to love things, that is to say, in the right order, so that you do not love what is not to be loved, or fail to love what is to be loved, or have a greater love for what should be loved less, or an equal love for things that should be loved less or more, or a lesser or greater love for things that should be loved equally.⁴¹¹

⁴¹¹ *doc chri.* 1.27.28 (CCSL 32: 22): "Ille autem iuste et sancte uiuit, qui rerum integer aestimator est; ipse est autem, qui ordinatam habet dilectionem, ne aut diligat, quod non est diligendum, aut non diligat, quod diligendum est, aut amplius diligat, quod minus diligendum est, aut aequae diligat, quod uel minus uel amplius diligendum est, aut minus uel amplius, quod aequae diligendum est."

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